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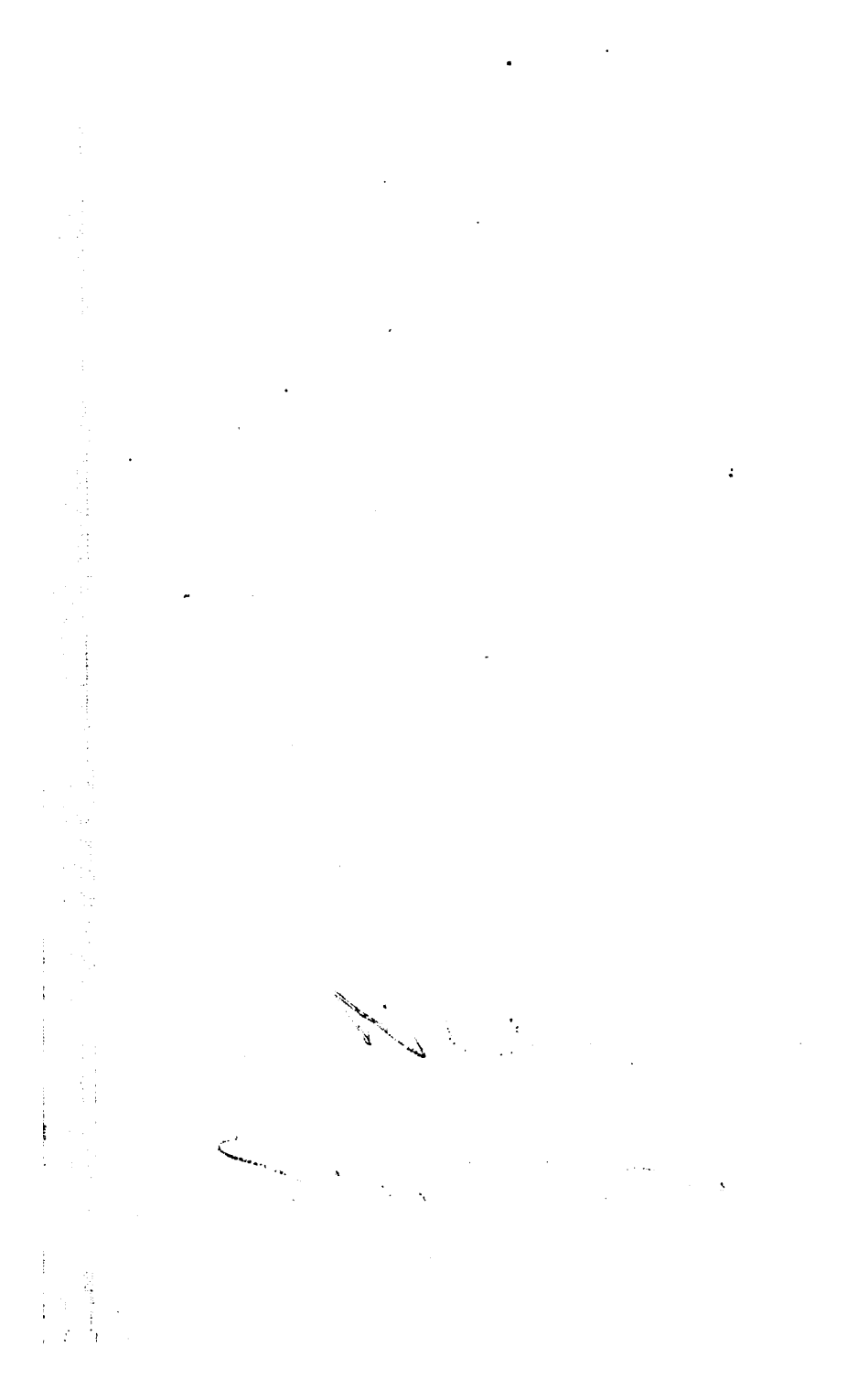
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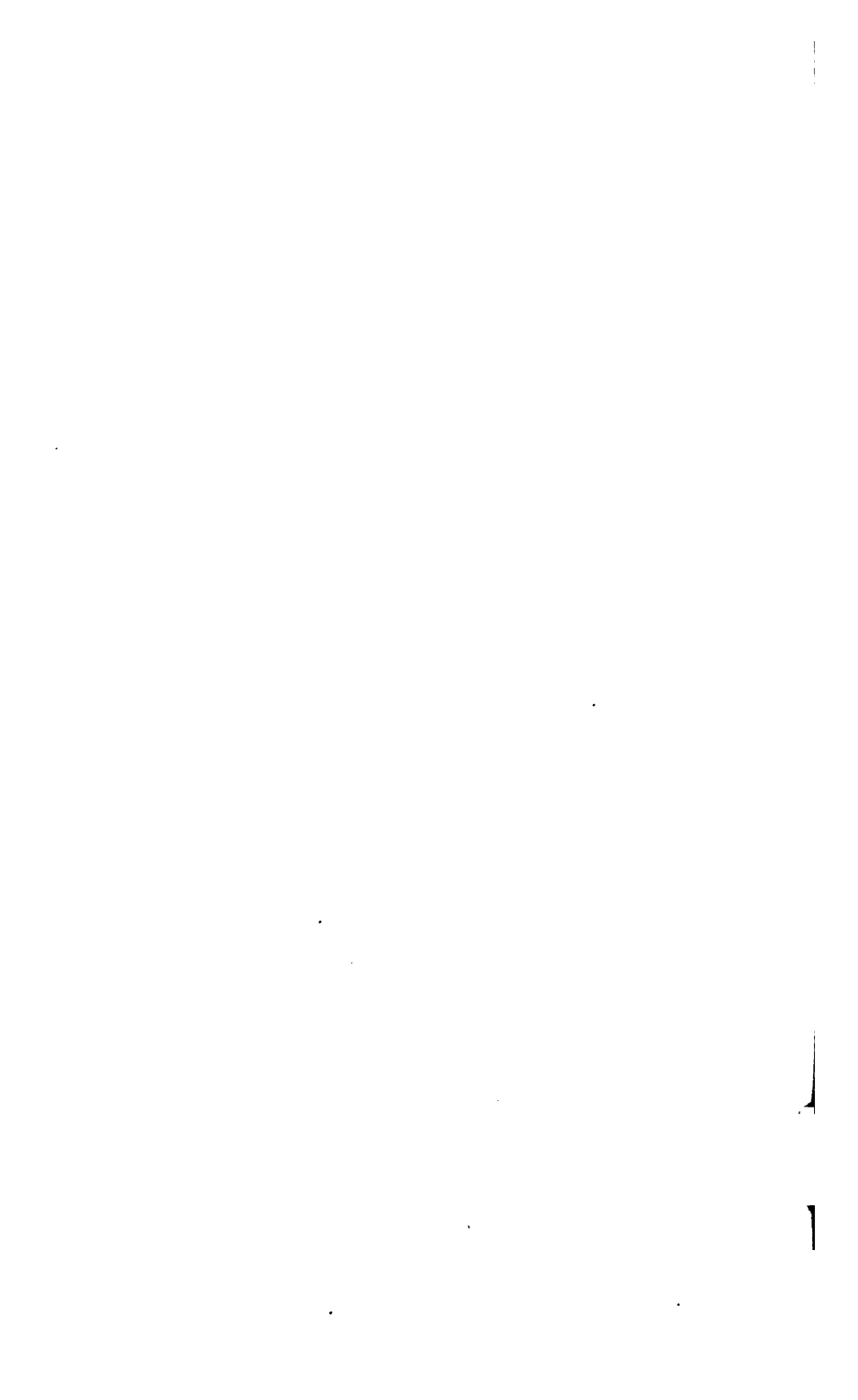
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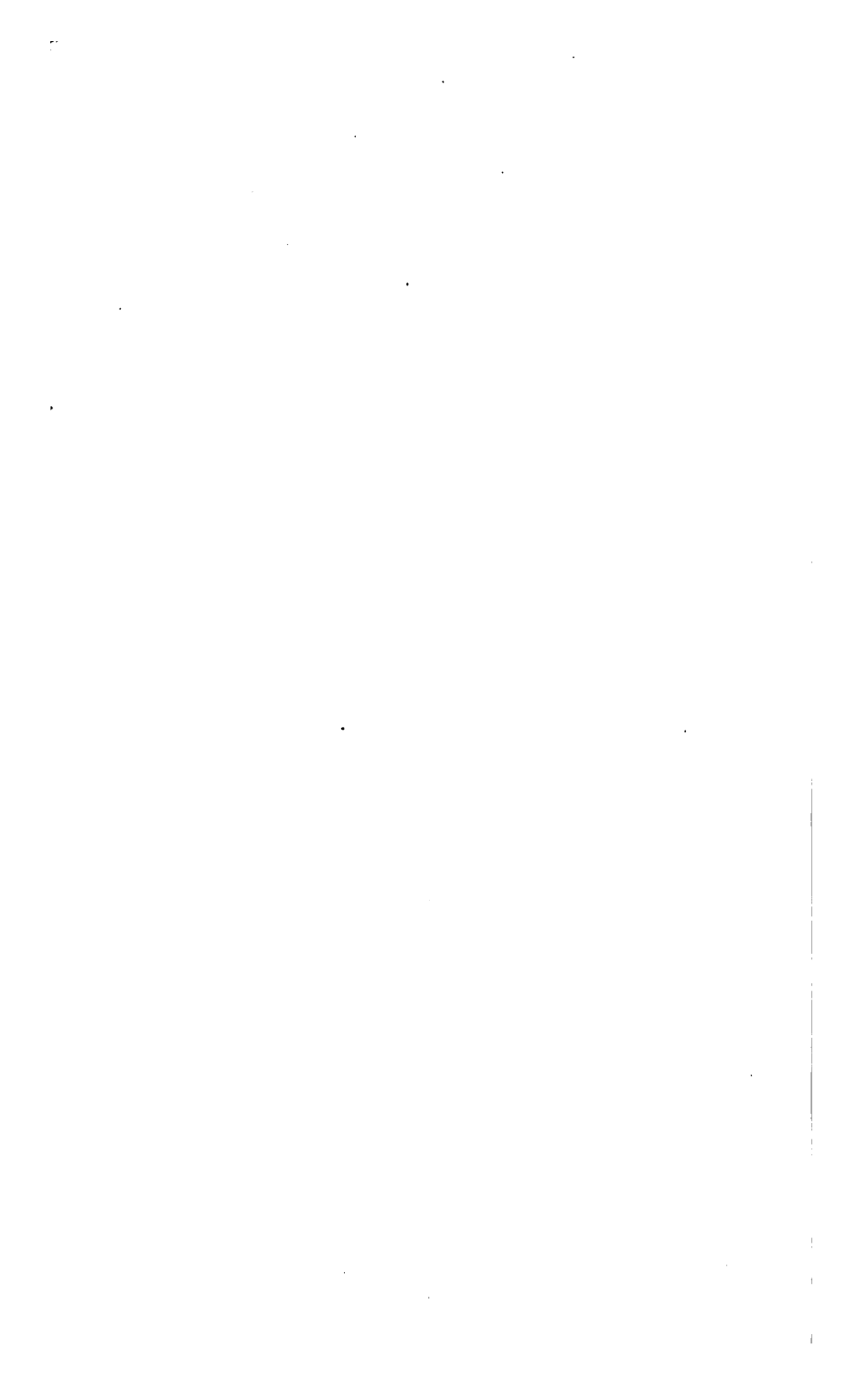


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THE NEW FOREST.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," "TOR HILL," &c.

——— "This boy is forest-born,
And hath been tutored in the rudiments
Of desperate studies."

As You Like It.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

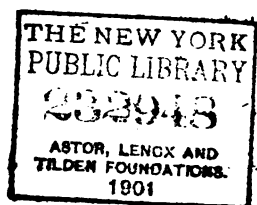
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NEW



ROY WEBB
JUL 17
1901

THE NEW FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

Noblemen, and Members of Parliament, have large cellars full of sealed bottles, to enable them the better to endure the wretchedness of life. The poor man seeks the same end by expending three halfpence in gin;—but no moralist can endure the idea of gin.

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

MANY a man who has predicted mischief or misery from an approaching event, would much rather that the evil should occur, than that his sinister prognostications should be falsified, to the impeachment of his judgment and foresight. Rochefoucauld's misanthropical maxim, that there is something in the misfortunes, even of our best friends, not altogether displeasing to us, may perhaps be partially true, where we have foretold the calamity, and in vain dissuaded the sufferer from the course which has produced it; for our self-love is generally so much stronger than the love of others, that we secretly enjoy the fulfilment of our auguries, in spite of the mischief it may have entailed upon our neighbours. It is recorded of some nice-calculating croaker, that he always prophesied failure and disappointment in whatever he undertook, as a hedge to his feelings, the gratification being the greater if he succeeded, contrary to his expectations; and the pain of having his forebodings realized, being considerably alleviated by the pleasure arising from a sense of his own prophetic acuteness. If there be any complacency in seeing our predictions accomplished, even at the expense of our friends, there must be a double annoyance where we have prophesied trouble and confusion to our adversaries, and the event has proved totally contrary to all our ominous prognostications.

Such was the unhappy plight of the suppressionists.

They had prefigured the opening of Pandora's box. They had anticipated as the sure consequences of the fair, drunkenness, confusion, riot, and bloodshed; but the more confidently they had called these spirits from the vasty deep of popular enjoyment, the less did they seem disposed to obey the summons, although provocation to break the peace had not been wanting in the overbearing insolence of some of the extra-constables sworn in to preserve it. In this dearth of grave delinquency, it only remained to make the most of such trifling misdemeanours as had actually occurred, and loudly to declare that they would have been of a much more heinous nature, but for the admirable arrangements made to preserve order. To predict what would have happened under a supposed contingency, is the safest of all vaticinations, since it is unsusceptible either of proof or refutation. In point of fact, not a solitary instance of assault or disturbance could be established, except the momentary scuffle occasioned by the suspicious conduct of Penguin, himself an active suppressionist; but several of the rustics, who had made too free with strong ale or more potent distillations, at the George or the Cricketers, had been consigned to the cage during the night, and were brought up on the following morning before Justice Frampton, to be fined for drunkenness.

That the magistrate was warranted in enforcing the full legal penalty for this offence, we do not mean to deny; but we question the consistency of the angry reprimand that accompanied the infliction, coming, as it did, from one whose gouty foot, the result of his own deep and daily potations, might have taught him forbearance towards a failing in other, which he had never been able to correct in himself. Nor can we by any means subscribe to his doctrine, when he declared that the vice of drunkenness was particularly reprehensible in the poor.

Measuring the extent of moral torpitude by the temptations to commit an offence, and the degree of knowledge and instruction that might be expected to prevent its commission, we should say, that few delinquencies can be more venial, than the occasional inebriety of an ignorant poor man; of one who turns, perhaps, from a cold, cheerless, miserable home, to the warm, comfortable, social jollity of an ale-house fire-side, and who, being assailed at once by moral and physical temptations, cannot resist an indul-

gence which exhilarates his mind by cheerful fellowship, relieves him from the present annoyances of cold, thirst, and hunger, banishes the recollection of all his past misery, and soothes every anxiety about the future. In this state, which the wretched may well deem their beatitude, the transgressor is often turned out of the tap-room into the streets; his intoxication, perhaps a first or very rare offence, furnishing a plea to some passing moralist for inveighing against the profligacy of the lower orders; while the rich drunkard, infinitely less excusable because more enlightened, and unassailed by the same allurements to excess, is borne to bed by his servants, or sent home in a carriage; and because his bestiality is not obtruded upon the general eye, he shall not only pass for a marvellous proper gentleman, but feel himself warranted in stigmatizing and punishing the poor offender as a profligate wretch, and an outfager of public decorum.

No sooner had our scandalized magistrate—himself a two-bottled man—vented his indignation, and imposed his fines upon his fellow-culprits of the rabblement, than he gave audience to Mr. Tyson, the village apothecary, a *bon vivant* and tippler, who took every body's draughts but his own, and contrived to make his Esculapian art minister to his epicurism, by recommending to his patients such good things as his own palate preferred, and then calling about half an hour before dinner, when he was tolerably sure of being invited to stay and partake of them. By this ingenious device he could scarcely fail to make both ends meet; for if his patients became worse, as was not unfrequently the case, and were obliged to discontinue their generous regimen, he poured in an additional quantity of drugs to remedy his own mistake; if, on the contrary, it agreed with them, he urged its continuance, and became a still more frequent guest; so that, in the former alternative he filled his purse, and in the latter his stomach. Fame having blazoned through the village Frampton's intended turtle feast, Tyson called to suggest the propriety of his taking a preparatory mixture on the day of its occurrence; observing, that although turtle in itself was a lighter and more digestible food than any of the testaceous or crustaceous tribe, it was generally amalgamated before it came to table with so many rich and pungent condiments, that the biliary ducts were apt to be disordered, and the chyle obstructed during the process of concoction. Frampton swallowed the bait, and the considerate apothecary was invited

to swallow his portion of the turtle, generally no mean one. Indeed, he had lately been a frequent diner at the Hall, having undertaken to keep up a good understanding between Frampton's digestive organs, the gout, and two bottles of Madeira per diem : a treaty of amity which he endeavoured to perpetuate, by producing a magical pill, which the patient took at the conclusion of the first decanter, and then began a new account with the bile, by attacking the second bottle.

For the disciple of Esculapius this was a capital arrangement, since he got a handsome dinner for nothing, and made, moreover, a daily charge for the pill.

Mr. Tyson having taken his departure to circulate through the village with an air of *nonchalance*, but a feeling of real triumph, the fact, that he had been invited to the great man's feast, Mr. Frampton ascended into the drawing-room, where he found Doctor and Miss Dotterel, the former having called to talk over the occurrences of the fair with his brother suppressionist, and to aggravate as much as possible the peccadilloes of the poor, which he condemned verbally with considerable asperity, although he never had the heart to punish any of the delinquents who were brought before him for such petty misdemeanours.

"My good Sir," he exclaimed, "the iniquity and profaneness of the lower orders, and, in fact, their bad conduct, is every day becoming worse and worse—ahem!—yes, Sir, I maintain that it has now attained a height that is altogether—aha!—an opinion in which I am quite sure that both yourself and Lady Susan will agree with me; and moreover, that it is solely attributable to the scandalous diffusion of education, and the march of intellect, as it is most irreligiously termed—yes, Sir, I repeat, irreligiously termed! For what is it but a wicked and daring innovation upon the wisdom of our ancestors? Why, Sir, what had been always called the genitive and accusative cases for many ages, must now, forsooth, be nick-named the possessive and the objective; and the most dangerous heresies have been broached as to the use of the subjunctive mood. This, Sir, may at first appear—ahem!—trifling, but it leads the rising generation to despise the wisdom of their ancestors—yes, Sir, of our ancestors and the good old times. Teach the young idea how to shoot, indeed!—Sir, it will teach them how to shoot us through the head, to lay the axe—ahem!—to the root of all our venerable institutions; and, moreover, as I am

sure you will admit, to undermine all our invaluable—ahem ! Does not my reflection strike you in the same light, Lady Susan ?”

“ I cannot say that I exactly caught either the light or the reflection,” replied her Ladyship, who generally treated the Doctor with a bantering contempt ; “ but I have no hesitation in saying, that if all classes are to be educated alike, I cannot understand how the upper orders are to preserve their superiority.”

“ Surely, Lady Susan, there can be no danger of that sort,” cried her husband, “ since they will always retain the great moral distinctions of wealth, and rank, and birth, and freedom from labour, together with all the offices of profit and power, whether in church or state, which constitute the only pre-eminence worth contending for.”

“ And on that very account the rabblement would like to have a fight for them, especially if we put arms in their hands, as we are certainly now doing, if it be true that knowledge is power.”

“ Very true, vastly true !” ejaculated the Doctor : “ I declare that observation is absolutely—ahem !—in fact, utterly—aha !—and I am sure, my good friend, must have wrought conviction in your mind. Shocking doings in the fair, I hear ! We foresaw it all. This is the march of intellect, I suppose, to wallow in luxury and—gluttony—yes, Sir, luxury and gluttony. By-the-by, I am glad to hear that the first batch of your East India Madeira is arrived at the Hall, and that the turtle is a fat and lively one. Ha ! I must reserve myself for Friday. They tell me poor Mr. Penguin was nearly killed by the mob, merely because he was one of the suppressionists. Horrid ! horrid ! indeed worse than horrid—absolutely improper ; but we foretold it all.”

In this strain of vituperation of the lower orders, mingled with occasional episodes about Madeira, and digressions upon the best mode of dressing turtle, our brother suppressionists continued their colloquy, while Miss Dotterel, having by this time rustled her silk gown more than once as a substitute for conversation, or rather, perhaps, because she did not know what to do with her hands ; having, moreover, with her forefinger and thumb, taken her usual pinches of petticoat, and brought it forward so as to shroud her thick ankles, looking all the while half-sheepish and half-demure ; and having in vain waited for any observation

from Lady Susan, at length poured forth a stream of her own peculiar gossipry, as if determined to escape for some time to come from the awkwardness of silence. "Oh, my dear Lady Susan! I am *so* glad the fair passed off without mischief, for I made sure there would be bloodshed, after that awful intimation that I received the day before.—Ah! I forgot, I never told you, though I meant to come over to the Hall on purpose. We were sitting in the breakfast-parlour about one o'clock—the Doctor, who had eaten very heartily of chine at breakfast, had taken but an indifferent luncheon, poor, dear man! and was just asking what there was for dinner, and how we should make up a rubber at night—when all of a sudden, without my being in the least degree prepared for it, what *do* you think happened?—Ah! you will never guess! I was seized with a bleeding at the nose! Now, for many years, my dear Lady Susan, I have always taken this as a solemn, prophetic warning of some impending calamity, for it has invariably been followed by bloodshed."

"Accompanied, you mean," said her Ladyship, in a dry, contemptuous tone.

"No, I don't mean accompanied, but followed; and this has ever been the case since that dreadful occurrence—I *must* tell you the heart-rending story—I have long wished to do so, and the time is at length arrived." Here her voice dropped into a solemn confidential whisper: "Poor dear Major Ogilvie, who is now dead and gone—heigho!—had long been showing me very marked attentions, in fact, paying me his addresses, though he had never made his declaration; when one morning, after having sung me a song of Farinelli's, the music I believe was Gluck's,—ah! you *should* have heard the Major, he *was* a sweet singer!—well, the Doctor had gone out to buy a new invented fish-sauce,—poor, dear man! he *does* like to have his fish well-dressed,—and I, remember he took Fanchette, my little beauty of a spaniel, with him, so that the Major and I were all alone in the breakfast-parlour, when, looking beseechingly in my face, he suddenly went down upon one knee before me—ah! there *was* gallantry in those days!—and taking my hand, which he tenderly pressed, made a passionate avowal of his love! I felt myself blushing, crimson deep, when at this agitating moment, just as I was about to utter a palpitating confession of my partiality, my eyes began to

twinkle, I felt a tingling at my nose, my mouth opened in spite of myself, and I sneezed, like an explosion of gunpowder, full in his upturned and imploring face! Now tell me, Lady Susan, you who know how tremendously I always sneeze, did you *ever*? Of *all* the awkward occurrences!—The Major started, as, indeed, well he might, but presently recovered himself, so did I; he gazed at me tenderly, and I was just about to relieve him from his suspense, when I sneezed with a second, and still louder explosion, that seemed to shatter the very nose from my face. That *was* a concussion!—Still pressing my imprisoned hand, but looking downwards, as if to avoid the shower-bath that I was so unintentionally scattering around me, he swore that he would never rise from his posture until I had pronounced his doom. I uttered a heartfelt sigh, and the soft avowal of mutual love was just trembling upon the tip of my tongue, when I felt something just trembling upon the tip of my nose!—Lady Susan, Lady Susan! it was beginning to bleed! did you *ever*? Of *all* the distressing moments!—I struggled to withdraw my hand that I might get my handkerchief, an action which the Major attributed to my coyness, and therefore did but grasp it the more firmly. In this contest, after I had frightfully spotted my tabinet silk gown, three blood-drops of an unusually large size fell upon the Major's wrist! He started up in an agony; I closed my eyes and sunk into a chair overwhelmed with confusion. Imagining I had fainted, the Major hastily seized a large tumbler of water which stood on a side-table, and threw it in my face. At such an unexpected sousing, I screamed with surprise and terror; the Mareschal powder which I then wore,—(I was always famous for my powder)—mingling with the water and the blood, converted my face into a hideous spectacle, the door flew open, the faithful Fanchette, thinking her mistress had been slain, flew at the poor, dear Major, and bit a large mouthful out of his left leg, while the transfixed and horror-stricken Doctor suffered the bottle of newly-discovered fish-sauce to fall from his hand, and he smashed to pieces upon the floor!—My dearest Lady Susan! consider what must have been my feelings! did you *ever*? It was altogether a scene for a tragedy.”

“Rather for a farce,” said her Ladyship, without altering a muscle of her countenance.

"The poor, dear Major!" resumed the spinster, "after I had subsequently accepted him, went to Edinburgh to arrange affairs for our marriage, caught an infectious fever, and I never saw him more!—Heigho! it *was* a trial, now wasn't it? Several suitors would have succeeded to his place in my affections, but since that fatal occurrence I have never been able to listen, for a single moment, to the addresses of any man."

"Except those of Pompey the Black," said Lady Susan, who, though she had always smiles and the most winning suavity at command for those whom she hated or feared, was generally serious with those whom she despised, and therefore preserved a perfect gravity upon the present occasion, notwithstanding the bantering strain of her observations.

"Oh, the horrid creature!" cried Miss Dotterel; "don't mention him; I have thought a hundred times since that I could still feel his odious black fingers chucking me under the chin; I wonder he didn't make my nose bleed. But certain it is, that an accident of that nature has never happened, since the poor, dear Major's death, without being followed by some shocking catastrophe; and though nothing of the sort has occurred at the fair, it is sure to come; and who knows, my dear Lady Susan, but that it may happen in this very house?—I *have* had my misgivings; I thought of it in the middle of the night, it *has* made me very unhappy, and I determined to give you a solemn warning on the subject. For your own sake, for Mr. Frampton's sake, for the sake of your family, for the sake of all your friends, I do implore you to be careful, my dearest Lady Susan, about your mushrooms! This is the season for pickling them, there are many of the poisonous sorts in the fields; I once knew three people who were killed by eating them, and that happened after a bleeding of my nose. It *was* a shocking case! almost as bad as that horrid affair of the family at Salt Hill, who were all poisoned by a dish of eels stewed in a copper saucepan. I hope, my dear friend, you look to your stewpans now and then; I examine ours every month with my own eyes."

"Dorothy! Dorothy!" cried the Doctor, who, while he was eagerly contending that the underside of a turbot was the best, had caught his sister's concluding observation, "How can you talk so gravely upon such uninteresting sub-

jects—yes, subjects—ahem! Who but you would think of tattling about saucepans?”

“Why, brother, I have often heard you talk before company about sauces.”

“Ay, Dorothy, but that’s a very different—ahem!—in fact, quite another—aha!”

“I am sure, brother, I would rather have swallowed a saucepan, even with the tinning off, than say any thing that you dislike.” The spinster looked at the party addressed with an affectionate smile, crossed her hands before her, and remained silent, but without one particle of acrimonious feeling, which was utterly foreign to her temperament, as it was, indeed, to her brother’s, who often talked illiberally and rebukingly, but seldom cherished a moment’s anger against any human being. “I fear, Lady Susan,” he continued, “you must be tired of listening to these culinary details.”

“You are mistaken, Doctor; that is a sensation I can never experience, for I never listen when I cease to feel any interest in the conversation.”

A turn was happily given to the conversation by the well-timed entrance of Augusta and Fanny, the former attired with her usual scrupulous adherence to the minutiae of fashion, and preserving her customary stiffness of regulated demeanour; a combination which, notwithstanding her superior beauty, would, by most observers, have been deemed less attractive than the easy elegance and unrestrained cordiality of Fanny. As the sun was not shining so as to create too searching a light, Miss Frampton ventured to place herself opposite to the window, making such a display of her well-turned ankle upon an ottoman, that Miss Dotterel, always horrified at this indecorum, took an extra-sized pinch of her own petticoats, and brought them so forward as completely to envelope both her splay feet. The practical rebuke was unnoticed by the party for whom it was intended; and Fanny immediately began to express with her habitual vivacity, the delight she had found in the sports and pastimes of the fair, the good humour of the whole party appeared to be effectually re-established. It was not, however, to remain altogether unruffled; she who had restored harmony being destined to give it a momentary interruption. Miss Frampton, after having sharply reprimanded her sister’s vulgarity in enjoying such a scene as the fair, and particularly her childish glee while gazing at the fooleries of Punch

and Judy, observed that *Farmer* Ringwood, as she contemptuously termed him, must be a low fellow, to mingle in the clownish games and amusements of the mob. Fanny was in general too volatile to be ever out of humour; accustomed to taunt and ridicule, they awakened no resentment in her bosom; but though she could bear them when levelled at herself, there was one other person, as it now for the first time appeared, to the rude and unjust censure of whom she could not listen with patience even for a single moment. Her sportive looks and tones suddenly deserted her, her bosom swelled, and the colour mounted to her very forehead, as, turning her angry eyes towards her sister, she exclaimed, "No, Augusta, Squire Ringwood—for he is no more a farmer than you are—is *not* a low fellow. Instead of being dressed like the effeminate fops and dandies of Bond-street, he may choose to wear the plain, manly garb of an English country gentleman—that does not make him a low fellow! Instead of keeping himself aloof with a supercilious pride from his tenants and poorer neighbours, and being detested for his self-punishing arrogance, he may condescend to supply their wants, and promote all their harmless recreations, until he is respected and beloved by the whole village—that does not make him a low fellow! He may not be so opulent indeed, as some of his neighbours, but as his present comparative poverty proceeds from a high principle of honour—that cannot make him a low fellow!" Hitherto she had run on with the ready eloquence of deep indignation, but as this subsided, she began to recollect that she had been somewhat too vehement in Ringwood's defence; and with that quick subtilty which sometimes springs even from the pureness of female modesty, she endeavoured to hoodwink her auditors, by continuing rapidly, though in a much calmer tone, "You shall never persuade me, Augusta, that Mr. Melcomb and Mr. Ringwood can be low fellows for endeavouring to amuse the poor villagers yesterday. I know but little of either; indeed, I hardly ever saw Mr. Melcomb before, but I could not sit still and hear him abused, especially as I have been informed he is an American, and cannot be supposed, therefore, to understand our customs and manners so well as a native."

Lady Susan, into whose contemplation it never entered that any daughter of hers could love a poor man, and who consequently never suspected the cause of Fanny's vehe-

mence, contented herself with exclaiming, "Hey-day, child! what can be the matter with you? You have never treated us before with such a burst of petulance, and when you feel any tendency towards a recurrence of it, I must beg that you will immediately walk up into your own room."

Augusta, who, from several little circumstances, had pretty accurately divined the real state of her sister's feelings, said, in the malicious hope of drawing attention to her inconsistency, "Truly, Fanny, I can hardly understand your meaning. You begin with a passionate defence of Mister Ringwood—since you will not allow me to call him farmer—and end with a vindication of Mr. Melcomb, whose name had never been mentioned."

"His conduct has been exactly similar, and he was, therefore, equally liable to your injurious imputation," replied Fanny, endeavouring to appear again composed, and shaking the ringlets over her face to hide her returning blushes.

"There is this difference, Fanny, between the two cases," said Mr. Frampton, "and it is a very essential one. When a rich man steps down this way from his sphere, it is evidently a temporary condescension, which his circumstances will never allow to become a permanent one. It is a freak, a vagary, and, in my opinion, a very silly one; but wealth must be allowed its privileges, even of eccentricity, or there would be no advantage in being opulent. When a poor man, however, puts off his gentility, it gives reason to apprehend that he is not condescending, but finding his proper level; and that he will acquire an habitual taste for those sports and associates, which are the only ones within the reach of his penury."

"There! there!" ejaculated the Doctor, "that is an observation which I call altogether—ahem!—in fact, absolutely—aha! Do not you, Lady Susan?"

"It can be designated by no other term," said her ladyship, slightly bowing her head, and speaking in a tone of dry contempt.—Fanny was not in the smallest degree converted from her own opinion, although the whole room was opposed to her, but having now recovered her self-possession, she was too prudent to prosecute the defence of Ringwood. Beginning already to suspect the nature of her own feelings towards him, and having a secret misgiving that her sister, whose malicious taunts she dreaded, had made a similar discovery, she became eager to turn the conversation,

and to avoid all scrutiny, for she had not yet entirely recovered from her confusion. With that quickness of resource in which the most artless woman is seldom deficient, she ran, therefore, to the window, and, seeing a cart approaching the house, expressed her opinion that it was bringing the remainder of the East India Madeira which her father was expecting. The device succeeded to admiration; Frampton hastily wheeled his gouty chair to the window, the Doctor put on his spectacles and threw up the sash, the two entered into an eager debate, as to whether it was the Madeira or not, and, in the midst of the moving and discussion, Fanny stole unperceived out of the room.

CHAPTER II.

Thy words are daggers—spare them then. Alas,
 How short is woman's triumph o'er herself!
 A brief uncertain time she may o'erpass
 Her sex's limits—for a while may soar
 To realms beyond her nature; but full soon
 She sinks in weakness down—as I do now!

G. F. RICHARDSON.

MRS. PENGUIN, whose admiration of Henry had rapidly increased at every fresh interview, and who anticipated no small share of *éclat* and reflected celebrity from his being domiciliated at Grotto-house, trumpeted forth his merits in every quarter, and found many a gossip ready to exaggerate her own hyperboles. Anxious, more especially, to bestow upon him that species of distinction to which she herself attached the most importance, she magnified his supposed wealth, and each hearer made liberal additaments, until, in a short time, and upon no other basis than Henry's own simple statement that he was in independent circumstances, his fortune was bruited abroad as something unprecedented and prodigious. Great riches, in the possession of a generous, handsome young bachelor, exercise a sort of magical influence, which few have philosophy enough to resist—especially if they be of the female sex. Wealth, which its possessor has accumulated by the labour of a long life, not

seldom accompanied by the sacrifice of health, and character, instead of making any very powerful appeal to our respect, rather strikes us by its insufficiency, when we see it thus associated with decrepitude and disrepute. But the opulence to which the young, joyous, and comely have succeeded, without the toil or responsibility of its acquirement, seems to be a potent and delicious enchantment, encircling the head of its owner with a halo of enduring happiness, and throwing a cheerful light upon the hearts of all those who come within its gladdening influence. Many a vision of gayety and glory; of equipages, servants, and operaboxes; of dress, diamonds, and fashionable parties; did the reputed fortune of Henry conjure up in the bosoms of the young ladies of Thaxted and its vicinity; while several provident mammas, who had hitherto been very negligent in their calls at Grotto-house, seized the very first opportunity of leaving cards, that they might thus make an early acquaintance with "the fortunate youth."—Lady Susan, Miss Frampton, Doctor and Miss Dotterel, with several other of the suppressionists, did indeed endeavour to convict him of vulgarity, on account of his disregard of modish attire, and his having mingled in the sports of the rustics; but their dissentient voices were presently drowned, and the question of his gentility was carried by acclamation. From such imputations there were many who would not altogether undertake to vindicate Ringwood; but that which might be lowering and reprehensible in the poor squire, became a generous disdain of foppery and fashion, a condescension tinged perhaps with a little eccentricity, but at all events a decided evidence of character and genius in the young and opulent Henry Melcomb. A certain air of romance, moreover, attached itself to his rescue of the smuggler's daughter, at the risk of his own life, which, in the opinion of the young ladies, placed him in a still more exalted point of view, and, in conjunction with his supposed wealth and personal recommendations, rendered him precisely that sort of hero which constituted their *beau ideal* of a desirable husband.

While he was thus an object of such warm panegyric with a portion of the better classes, he had achieved, in the few days of his residence at Thaxted, a not less marked popularity among the villagers and peasants. Old Nettle-top's nephew, instead of keeping his secret, had, in the

warmth of his gratitude, divulged the whole extent of Henry's generosity—a circumstance which, together with his gallant and humane conduct at Hordle Cliff, his personal exploits at the fair, and his liberality towards his competitor, had made him a sort of prodigy in their eyes; especially when they beheld such conduct emanating from a man of great imputed opulence, and contrasted it with the arrogance and hauteur of some of the other rich residents in the same vicinity. Never, perhaps, had a favour so general and enthusiastic been obtained in so short a space of time.

There was another quarter, somewhat remote from the immediate scene of his actions, where he was held in still higher admiration, and his services recalled with a still more fervent gratitude. This was the Grange Farm, the residence of the smugglers, to which we must now conduct our readers. After the failure of the Captain's enterprise, as recorded in our third chapter, it will be recollected that George, whose broken leg prevented his immediate removal, had been left at a public house by the sea-side. Fearing, however, that a warrant might be issued for his arrest, and shrinking with dismay from the thought of a public exposure, he insisted on being conveyed next night to the Farm, where there was more than one hiding-place that might defy discovery. This was accordingly done, though not without injury, as it subsequently appeared, to the wounded leg. "My Lord," the traitorous confederate, who, in the language of the smugglers, had "scamped, played booty, blown the bite," had never obtained the complete confidence of the Captain, which was the principal reason for his leaving him at home on the night when the Long-splice was to run her valuable cargo ashore. From a lurking distrust of his countenance—for the Captain was a shrewd physiognomist—he had also carefully concealed, during his short abode at the farm, the existence of the secret store; so that when the revenue officers presented themselves at the Grange, as they did shortly after the affray, those keen inquisitors could neither discover a single bale of smuggled goods, nor detect the smallest traces of the wounded inmate. Honest Rough-and-ready, who, during their search, had stood surveying them with his usual imperturbable phlegm, departed so far from his habitual taciturnity at its conclusion, as to exclaim with a sneering smile, and a slight

jerk of his shoulder, "Why, lubbers! this is worse than Jack Mason's haul, for he pulled up a congor-eel and a sea-hedgehog, but you have caught nothing to carry home upon your shoulders except what you brought with you, and that's a fool's head! Harkee, you landsharks! take care of yonder black dog, for his name's Belzebub; and when every one has his own cargo aboard, I reckon you'll be under the Devil's hatches, heh! heh!"

"Start my timbers!" cried the Captain, taking the meerschau pipe from his mouth, and affecting all the indignation of injured innocence, "is this the way an honest farmer's to be served; to overhaul his lockers, and rummage him from stem to stern, as if he were sailing under false colours? Gover'ment ought to have a moukey's allowance, or a taste of the cat-o'-nine-tails, for treating old Blacklocks in this way, a'ter what I did for 'em during the war. But there's no gratitude stirring nowhere. Avast! heave off! shoot a-head, ye thick-skulled coves! there's no grog here; so bout ship and luff, I tell ye, for Belzebub begins to growl, and if he clears deck for a set-to, and runs ye aboard, I wouldn't give a brass button for your sheathing, unless you're copper-bottomed!"

The huge black mastiff, apparently divining that their purposes were hostile, had indeed been dogging at the heels of the visitants with half bristling mane, and a subdued snarl, casting an occasional look at his master, as if only awaiting a signal for attacking them; so that the men, who by this time began to despair of making any discovery, were not sorry to leave the premises and return to their station. No sooner had they quitted the farm, than the Captain, having previously planted the boy Moon at the Pigeon-house, to give notice should any of the officers return, hastened to the concealed room, where George was lying upon a truckle bed, and told him, not without manifest exultation, how completely the landsharks had been baffled; adding, that according to the information of the officers, no other than search-warrants had been issued, and that he might therefore consider himself safe from all danger of arrest. "Not that I can tell," he exclaimed, "how the devil they could pop you into a warrant, unless they have learned more about you than I have; for sink me, if I know or care what your name is besides George! You didn't tell it to My Lord, did you?"

"Neither to him, nor to you, nor to any human being will I make the avowal," replied the wounded man. "No, no, no!—that is a word which shall never pass my lips, for I will not bring ignominy on the innocent. Let me endure the whole penalty of my own criminal career."

"Shiver the Longsplice! what d'ye mean by that, George? A criminal's a sneaking, skulking, cheating, lying, cowardly scoundrel! but your fellow of the free trade is a bold, honest, well-hearted gentleman, who makes war upon the lubberly Customs and 'Cise—cause why?—they meddle first with him—but in every other respect, honours the king, and obeys the laws. I was thinking, George, afore I got up this morning, what a capital free-trader might have been made of that fine young chap that saved your life and Polly's! They tell me he's as rich as a Jew. What a pity! what a noble smuggler spoiled! Bold as a lion, nimble and lissome as a greyhound; swims, I warrant, like a fish, backs a horse as if he had been born in the saddle, and I dare say knows how to handle sail, oar, or rudder, as well as I do myself, that have been used to it from a boy."

"Happy, happy, Henry Melcomb!—for such I understand is his name," exclaimed George, "Oh! may he never abuse the talents with which he is endowed, never sink to an occupation so humiliating as mine, never experience my present misery and remorse. For having so gallantly saved the life of Mary, he will be for ever entitled to your gratitude and to mine; but upon myself he would have conferred a greater favour had he left me where I was—to perish and to be forgotten."

"Clew up your jawing tackle! I know you're a brave fellow, so don't talk like a snivelling milksop. Cheer up lad, cheer up, and never be faint-hearted, cause you've met with a mishap. Start my timbers! I've known many a chap in better spirits when he had a bit of lead in him, or a spliced bone, than when he hadn't—Jem Stokes, of Keyhaven, was one on 'em. Did you know Jem Stokes, the carpenter?—Poor fellow! the fishes had him last year; capsized in a squall off the Needles. 'Twas Jem first made the Longsplice what she is: true as ever I'm standing here this very minute! Tell you how it happened. He and I were on the beach together under Hurst Castle, and I fell a swearing to see the Polly—for she was called the Polly then—floundering about like a great lubberly Dutch galliot. 'Curse and sink.

that cross-grained tub!" said I; "I've tried her both lugger-rigged, and cutter-rigged, and she won't sail no-how, and what's more, she never *will* sail."—"Not as she is now," said Jem Stokes; "but I know how to make her as fast a cutter as any 'twixt Falmouth and Spithead."—"That's a lie!" said I, "if ever you told one."—"But it aint, though," says he; "only you put her into my hands; I'll cut her right in half, make her twelve feet longer, and if she don't sail then, I won't charge you a shilling for the job."—"Done!" says I, for I couldn't lose by that bargain. Jem took and sawed her right in half, made her twelve feet longer; and sure enough, when we launched her again, she sailed like a fish; and nothing has ever come nigh her since; and ever since that 'ere day I called her the Longsplice. Did you see t'other morning how she distanced the revenue-cutter? Lord! she could fly round her like a bird."

"I caught a glimpse of her as the sun rose," replied George, "but I was suffering too acutely to attend to her superior sailing."

"Well, now, I could lie and watch her by the hour together, even if I had half a dozen holes through me. To be sure, it's bad work to have a bone shivered, as I myself know, though it's the chance of war; but Lord! we must all take our lot, come when and how it will; and I have been as near death's door as you were, without ever losing a drop of blood. Tell you how it happened. Stood in the water—winter-time too—up to the shoulders, running a crop of dry, under Hengistbury-head; jumped upon black Bess to ride home through the forest; began to rain at first, then froze bitterly all the rest of the night. In about an hour I was a sheet of ice, frozen up, deaf, dumb, and blind as a marine spike. But black Bess warn't, and so she stopped at the Grange; and out comes a fellow we called Prime-and-load—cause why? he took snuff and tobacco. 'Hilloa!' cries Prime-and-load, 'here's the Capt'n come home dead as a door-nail!' And so I was, cold and stiff as a poker. So they took me off the mare, and laid me in an out-house, and one of our chaps went off to see about having a crown-er's quest, lest any on 'em should get into trouble. But in less than half a pipe, honest Rough-and-ready comes in, 'Why,' says he, 'it aint a trifle'll take the breath out of the Captain's body, so afore ever we have the quest, we'll give him a fair chance and a good rolling.' Well, they rolled

me backwards and forwards, for all the world like a barrel churn, till I gave a groan and began to move, when they got me into a warm bed, poured some brandy down my throat, and so at last brought me about, and cheated death and the crowner too : but I was desperate bad, couldn't move hand or foot for a fortnight a'ter."

"And yet, to look at your figure, or to see you, as I have, hauling a loaded boat ashore, or carrying off four tubs at once, with the strength of a Hercules, one would think you had never known suffering or sickness."

"Ay, but I have though, and a good share too," replied the Captain ; who not only loved to crack of his former exploits, but thought, in the present instance, that the recital might amuse and comfort his companion. "I've had worse bouts than that 'ere, when I was frozen up. Tell you one on 'em. Commanded a large Dutch schooner, with a rare crop, which we meant to run at Hastings. Got foreign papers on board, as if from Flushing to Bilboa, all right and regular. Brought-to off Dunkirk by a King's ship—not till she had fired a couple of shot though.—'Hallo! Lion Bouldersen,' says the Lieutenant, for he happened to know me, and the King's officer's always called me Lion, or else Blacklocks—'Hallo!' says he, 'are you turned Dutchman? Why didn't you bring to? this looks queer. What's the rig?—where's your papers! Flushing to Bilboa,' says he, looking woundy sharp at 'em; 'All right, all right. Now let's see what water you've got aboard. What! only two days water! That won't do, no how; you must be bound for a shorter trip than Bilboa. What do you mean to drink when this is gone?'—'Why,' says I, 'what's that to you? Mayhap salt-water, and mayhap nothing at all.'—He shook his head—'cause why? he smelt a rat: but he couldn't stop me for all that, papers all right and regular. So that night it came on to blow a proper hurricane, south and south-west; blew us right up into the North Sea; couldn't make head for six days, and never saw a sail. So our water was presently all gone, and sure enough I never thought to suffer what I did for the want on't; for when I'm ashore, and can get grog or punch, I never think of touching it. Lord! Lord! that was a bad bout; the worst I ever had, ten to one! Can't tell ye what we all suffered; but you go and ask honest Rough-and-ready, for he was one on us, and he took to salt-water, which made him worse; and much as we could

do to prevent his throwing himself overboard. However, we fell in with a Dantzicker, got a supply, and run our whole crop a'ter all."

"Truly, Captain, I wonder that such dangers and sufferings never induced you to quit the free trade."

"Why, lookye, George; as to danger, I reckon it's pretty much the same everywhere. There was Jack Clincher, now, that had tumbled about at sea, night and day, fair and foul, for twenty, ay, three-and-twenty years, was drowned t'other day in a shallow pond, down here by Crockford Water; and Ned Evans, of Needsore Point, Squinting Ned, as they called him, a regular free-trade man, after being all his life among the poppers and slashers, without ever a scratch, was shot dead by his own little boy, who pulled the trigger of his gun, not knowing she were loaded. So, you see, every bullet has its billet; and when a fellow's hour is come, it's no use dodging and diving. The stoutest heart that ever beat must strike its red flag one day or another; and the 'sweet little cherub that sits up aloft' on purpose to look a'ter a fellow must be put out of commission. Give us your hand, George! I'll stand by you to the last drop of my blood—'cause why?—you twice took the fire that was meant for me: but don't go to treat me so again, or else you and I shall fall out; we shall, upon my soul! That 'ere bit o' lead that cracked your leg ought to have been in me, by good rights; and I don't want no one to run away with any part of my share. Every dog his own doom, that's my motto—'cause why?—fair play's a jewel. However, I won't quarrel with you this time.—Lord! you look as white as a scuttlefish, and as washy as a sea-dab!—Hilloa! Polly, girl, Polly! bear a hand with a cordial and some of the Doctor's stuff, or else George will be swamped while he's at anchor! I wouldn't have him slip his cable, and make for t'other world,—no, not for every farthing that I am worth in this!"

Although Mary's health had been rapidly and completely reinstated after her return to the Grange, her bosom had ever since been deeply agitated. That her father's recent enterprise should have failed, and that he should thus be absolved from the pledge by which he had bound himself to retire from a mode of life which she contemplated with a daily increasing abhorrence, was one source of deep vexation, though of a less tender and poignant nature than that which arose from the state of her feelings with reference to

George. Now that his present safety was secured, and his final recovery placed beyond all reasonable doubt, she could not revert to her conduct at Hordle Cliff, generous and even heroic as it had been, without a thrill of shame and humiliation at the thought that it might be attributed, by the sufferer himself, as well as by others, to her personal love of the individual. When she recalled his equivocating conduct, and more especially his unexplained interview with the strange lady in the forest, a rush of indignant jealousy made her recoil with additional aversion from the very idea of being subjected to any suspicion of this nature. Detesting in others whatever was opposed to the straightforward, bold integrity of her own purposes ; impetuous and high-spirited ; offended at George's vacillating demeanour, yet feeling that her secret attachment, even in the midst of her angry emotions, was confirmed and softened by the sight of his sufferings, she could scarcely understand her own sensations, or prescribe to herself a line for her own conduct. In this conflict, pride so far gained the ascendancy over tenderness, that when George, in their first interview after his arrival at the farm, poured forth a passionate strain of gratitude, that might well be termed the eloquence of love, although it breathed not the name, Mary, assuming an air of cold reserve that was foreign to her heart, exclaimed, "I had requested, Sir, in our last conversation, that you would forbear this sort of fulsome language, which it becomes not you to use, nor me to hear, and I must now repeat the injunction. We are nothing more to one another than accidental inmates of the same house, and I desire that we may always converse as such. As to this occurrence at Hordle Cliff, you owe me no particular gratitude—none, whatever. I did not at first even know that it was you whom I saw upon the rock ; and had it been any other, I should, from motives of common humanity, have acted in precisely the same manner. I had rode far and fast that night in search of my father ; I was over-fatigued, perhaps a little frightened, and I fainted away, as any other might have done under the same circumstances."

"Any other, indeed, might have fainted away," said George ; "but few others would have so nobly ventured their life to save mine. Do not, then, forbid me to express a gratitude which I can never cease to feel ; do not blame the irrepressible enthusiasm of a heart which feels ready to

leap from my bosom whenever you approach. Gratitude, at least, is a blameless emotion, consider it as nothing more. My secret thoughts, my silently cherished wishes, may, indeed, point to a bliss as transporting as it is unattainable ; but if I ever dared to give direct utterance to any such impossible dreams, I should be a scoundrel indeed. No, Mary, I may have been foolish, mad, criminal towards others ; but so pure and holy have been the emotions you have awakened in my bosom, that my heart would rather burst asunder than allow me to act dishonourably. Thus have I ever felt, into whatever passionate language my admiration may have sometimes betrayed me ; and thus do I feel more intensely than ever, now that pain, solitude, and reflection have brought me to a better sense of duty, and pointed out to me the course I ought to pursue. Believe me, Mary, you shall have no farther cause to complain of me."

"I am glad of it, and shall still be more so when I find that your conduct towards others is equally free from blame ; when I know that solitude and reflection have not proved useless counsellors, but that you have determined to abandon for ever the lawless and disreputable occupation of a smuggler."

"Oh, my sweet and sage monitress ! your friendly wishes are but the echo of my own heart. I believe this wound to have been a judgment for my misdeeds ; I accept it as such : and in the silence, darkness, and remorse of the past night, I have solemnly pledged my soul to renounce instantly and for ever my present mode of life."

"George ! it is well and wisely resolved, and I should despise you for ever if you could flinch from so laudable a purpose. I thank you, I thank you a thousand times for your resolution ; it has made my heart absolutely leap with pleasure, for it may perhaps induce my dear father to follow your example. Oh ! if you could but accomplish this, the nearest and dearest object of my wishes, you would be remembered through the remainder of my life as my best and most valuable friend. I cannot tell you how happy I feel, even at the thought of so blessed a change."

"I should be the most ungrateful of wretches, did I not endeavour to gratify your desires, and I therefore pledge myself to use all my influence with the Captain. But he is as inflexible as he is brave, and has sworn to have the remainder of the Longsplice's cargo ashore. How soon this

may be accomplished I knew not, for she has been ordered back, for the present, to the opposite coast; and the increasing moon will not allow any early repetition of the attempt. With this, however, I myself have nothing to do; for even did not my wound make me a prisoner, I have finally resolved never again to stir hand or foot in the free trade."

"These, at least, are glad tidings to me, and I may now, indeed, be proud of having contributed to save a life which will henceforth, I trust, be devoted to a happy and an honourable career."

"Happiness for me! Oh, never, never! Yes, indeed, there may be one solace for me in after-times, when I shall, perhaps, be far, far away from her who has infused this sweetening and redeeming drop into the bitter cup of my existence;—the word 'Mary' shall be to me hereafter as a fond and pleasant dream of memory, coming over me in lone places, in the deep dead of night, in sickness and in sorrow, soothing my troubled soul, and stilling the whispers of conscience with its silent music. Oh! what an angel minister of grace is virtuous woman! What love and sweetness are in all her ways! Surely, surely, my heart cannot have altogether perished, my soul cannot have been utterly degraded, since it can entertain so pure and holy a reverence for Mary Boulderson."

"You are forgetting yourself and falling into the language that I had forbidden," said Mary, blushing and confused, and yet not without a secret feeling of complacency at being made the object of an admiration so passionate and respectful.

"Forgive me, dearest Mary! pardon that epithet—my lips were unconscious of it, it escaped from my heart. Do not grudge me the only consolation I can know, either now or for the future. Alas! should I unfortunately live to be old, I shall never enjoy the pleasure of looking back upon a well spent youth. I shall never taste that sole and true elixir of life, which, throwing off age and infirmity, rejuvenizes the heart, and wafts it back into the sunshine, and flowery bloom and elastic joyousness of its first spring."

"Nay, nay, George, this is an unjust and gloomy view. Whatever may have been your early lapses, you will, at all events, have the solace of reflecting that you did not persevere in evil courses, that you did not end your days as you

had begun them, that you had the resolution to quit spontaneously your lawless course of life, and commence a new and better career."

"Oh, Mary! it does indeed require resolution, for it takes me from you. But it must, it shall be done!—ay, and quickly, before my heart fails. From this moment I am no longer one of your father's comrades, though I have not yet had the courage to tell him so. I have no right, therefore, to be protected beneath his roof, to share his hospitality, to deprive him of an abler and more willing partner. I will quit the Grange immediately."

"What! in your present deplorable plight? Impossible! quite impossible! You have already suffered by the removal from Hordle, and my father will never consent to your incurring any fresh danger."

"Mary, Mary! I am exposed to still greater danger while I remain here. You do not know me, or you would not urge me to continue beneath this roof. I am weak, unsteady, pliable, infirm of purpose, and it is because I have learned to distrust myself, that I have resolved to quit the Grange to-morrow."

"My father will never allow it—I will never allow it! 'Twere inhumanity to consent to it, even in a stranger; but to suffer it in you—you who have received a wound in protecting my dear father—how can you imagine that we could ever commit an act of such black ingratitude? See what a state you are in at this moment! your looks confess your utter helplessness. Take this cordial, George, it will restore you; and prythee, talk not; nay, now, do not even dream of quitting the Grange till you can better bear the removal."

At the sight of the patient's evident exhaustion, her voice softened into tenderness, while, as she presented the cordial to him, her hand shook, and there was an affectionate anxiety in her countenance that betrayed how deeply she was affected by his illness. "Besides," she continued, after a short pause, "whither would you go? You cannot be carried far without much suffering and danger, and you will long, I fear, require surgical advice and attendance."

"I am deeply, gratefully sensible of your kindness, and the more tenderly I feel it, the more am I resolved upon leaving you. Nor need I travel far. Here in the forest, just beyond Boldre-wood-walk, I know of a sequestered cottage, in the

vicinity of which I have a dear, valued, and most prudent friend, who will see me safely concealed, and take not less care for my recovery, than you could bestow upon me yourself."

A flash of jealous and indignant anger suddenly lighted up the face of Mary, as she reflected that the cottage mentioned must be the place of assignation where he had held his mysterious meeting with the strange lady; but her curiosity to develop this ambiguous affair, overpowered, for the moment, every other feeling, and, condescending even to employ *finesse* in the hope of drawing out some confession, she exclaimed, with an air of assumed indifference, "If the gentleman to whom you allude be so careful a guardian as you describe him, he would never wish you to be removed in your present state."

"I did not allude to any gentleman," replied George, in some embarrassment, "but to one who is most near and dear to me; to a lady who—I cannot enter into particulars without both compromising my own safety and that which is ten times more precious to me—the happiness of the individual in question—but the day may perhaps arrive when I may be enabled to——"

"Nay, Sir," interposed Mary, with sparkling eyes and reddened face, "pray do not for a moment imagine that I have the smallest wish to know any thing about an affair which, I dare say, will little bear publicity. You are your own master, the properest judge of your own actions, the fittest chooser of your own friends, the best enabled to decide upon your own health. If you feel yourself well enough to quit the Grange, pray do so, as soon as it may please you. I am quite sure that neither my father nor myself would wish to detain you against your inclinations, not for a day—no. Sir, not for a single minute."

Having thus spoken with an air and in a tone of constrained calmness, she quitted the room, and tried to sing to her guitar in an adjoining chamber, in order to prove her nonchalance; but her trembling voice failed her, she was obliged to desist, and had not pride and indignation supported her, she would have betrayed the disappointment of her heart in a burst of weeping.

CHAPTER III.

O no ! for I would rather roam
In the humble walks of my cottage home,
I would not but hear my mother's voice !
I would not but bid her heart rejoice !
For all the mines of wealth that sleep
In the bottomless caves of the ocean deep.

G. F. RICHARDSON.

HENRY, in the mean time, arriving safe in London, proceeded immediately to join Mrs. Tenby, his step-mother, who being of a most parsimonious disposition, had, taken mean lodgings in an obscure street leading out of Holborn, where the rapacity of the landlady, and the dishonesty of her servants, soon put her to a much greater expense than if she had engaged handsome apartments in a more respectable quarter of the town. This miscalculating thrift had often placed her in a similar predicament, but she had not the heart to amend it in any other way than by a jealous and incessant vigilance over the paltry details of housekeeping, which involved her in perpetual squabbles with all parties. Although Mrs. Tenby had now lost some portion of the personal comeliness which had won the heart of her late husband, she retained her full share of that provincial, not to say illiterate vulgarity which Henry had in vain endeavoured to correct, and which marked her at once for an uneducated Virginian. This defect was rendered still more conspicuous by a drawling nasal intonation, a pretty free use of the most homely American colloquialisms, and the singing sound imparted to her ordinary discourse by her invariably leaving off with a high note, instead of the customary low one of the English.

We have stated elsewhere, that notwithstanding her former cruelty to Henry, she had latterly, but more especially since he had so easily resigned his fortune in her favour, entertained for him a sort of compassionate attachment, considering him, to use her own phraseology, as "little better than a naitral gump in all worldly concerns, and no more

able to fight his own battles, than a cub in a bear-trap, or a squirrel in a raccoon's nest." On his own account, therefore, she was not sorry to see him back in London; but more especially was she delighted, for her head and heart had been ciphering during the whole of his narrative, when he stated the hospitable reception he had experienced from Mark Penguin, the genteel style in which that personage lived, his independent circumstances, and the friendly invitation he had given them to become inmates of Grotto-house, until they could determine their plans, and find a fitting residence for themselves.

"What!" she exclaimed, with an animated look, little in accordance with her drawling mode of speaking, "He didn't invite us for a week, or a fortnight, or a month, then, but asked us to turn in now, and not turn out till we are tired?"

"Not till we had suited ourselves with a house, if we determined on settling in the neighbourhood," said Henry.

"Butternuts and codfish! that's prime—that's the prettiest bit of news, I reckon, I have picked up since I came to the Old Country. Why, the old badger's a warm one, I warrant, and lives like a pretty considerable somebody, or I'd lose a guess! Well, Henry, the best roof to be under is that which covers another man's house; and when once I seat myself down beneath his, I shan't turn out in a hurry; tell me on't, if I do! Sure none but a gawk will pay away hard dollars for rent, when he may live for nothing, like a squatter in a log-hut. What's the *vally* of his property, d'ye reckon? How many acres, and how many dollars do they fetch him in?—Got no children, say?—Joes to coppers he'll have none, for his brother, my first husband that was, never had any. Ah! I shall love him mighty bad, I rather guess. Well, as I'm alive, I long to be jogging, for I'm robbed and cheated here, up-stairs and down-stairs, from Passamaquoddy to the Mississippi, as we say in Virginny—from Currituck Sound to the Laurel Mountain, as they talk in Carolina."

"The greater Mr. Penguin's kindness," said Henry, "the more ungenerous would it be in us to take advantage of it. An invitation does not imply domiciliation: but this was an invitation; we shall not be justified, therefore, in making a lengthened stay. A visit is not a permanent residence."

"There you go! chopping logic, as if you were cutting

pitch knots for candles, and always taking the side that makes against yourself, or else 'twouldn't be you. Why, boy, the old one, has no doubt got a power of dumps, and I'm sure you have little enough, so keep what you have, and live scot-free while you may; for 'gold makes gold,' as poor Richard says, 'and the more pence you can save, the more pounds you will have.' "

" You will oblige me very much, now that we are come to England," said Henry, " if you would drop poor Richard's sordid maxims, and speak the language of the country, instead of this Yankee dialect."

" Rattlesnakes and ringums! that's a good one! I speak real old ginooine Virginny, and that's better, I guess, than all the new-fangled rubbish that we shall hear in these parts. Raily, you progress at a strange rate. Sordid maxims, forsooth! it would be better for you, if you would profit by them, instead of trampoosing about the country, as you did in America, attending to every body's concerns but your own; going out wool-gathering, and coming home shorn. There! that's into you, I reckon! And pray, boy, when do you mean'to set about some business or other for yourself; for 'twould puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to tell how you mean to live on a hundred a-year? Snecks! I wish you would recollect for once what poor Richard says, 'no gains without pains; then help hands, for I have no lands.' Didn't I tell you over and over, when we were in the new settlement at Johnson's Town, that if you went on spouting and planning, and attending committees for the good of others, you would never do any good for yourself? Didn't I remind you, that if you would plough deep while sluggards sleep, you would have corn to sell and to keep? "

" You have never been remiss, I must confess, in inculcating any of poor Richard's morality, such as it is, and yet I do not feel disposed to become his convert. I despise the selfish and debasing struggle for wealth that is instilled into us, as the primary lesson, and the most important law of life. Be satisfied, madam, with knowing, that while I am occupied, as I hope I shall constantly be, to the best of my ability for the benefit of others, I cannot be idle; and that while I am content with what I have, I cannot be poor."

" Only hear him! Why, this beats all natur! to think that a young man like you, spry and active, with a power of legs and arms, soople as a young catamountain, should think o

doing nothing but stray-va-ging about all day like a great fat, lazy opossum. As I'm alive, one would think you had got Injun blood in ye. Pretty considerable tejus you'll find such a life, or I'd lose a guess. Rich enough with a sneaking hundred a-year! But a quair notion, I reckon, for any one's that's not on the cracky order. Why, then, if you never mean to add more to it, you should take the greater care of what you have, and husband the few hundreds that was saved for you during your minority; and 'take care of the pence, for a small leak will sink a great ship; and always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom,' as poor Richard says."

"Have you any particular reason for harping on poor Richard at the present moment, or may I consider it as only a rehearsal of your established lectures?"

"Why, then, boy, I have a particular reason, and a pretty considerable handsome one, I conceit. Guess you're in some danger of having the dollars in your pocket knocked down, faster 'n sixteen more'll pick 'em up again. So look out, and stay to house, while we remain in London, or else you'll buy the rabbit, that's all."

"To become intelligible you should avoid enigmas; but you speak in nothing else, therefore you are not intelligible."

"So! you have got to your syllygisms again, have you? Snecks! you give 'em a terrible good name, for they are mighty silly, sure enough. Guess you'll understand me presently. Recollect young Enoch Clayton? him that came from Kentucky, or somewhere that way, right down east. I sha'n't forget in a hurry how he used to drop in of a morning, when we were living in the back country, and never went away without a swig of warm cider, some roasted apples, hasty-pudding and molasses, pumpkin-pie and sweet sarse, or whatever was going, and generally put his hand into the hickory-nut bag before he showed us his back."

"I have little recollection of all this, but I shall never forget his jumping into the lake after me when I fell overboard."

"The greater gawk he! for you can swinn like a cork, and was never in any more danger than an eel in a trout stream."

"Which, however, he did not know when he so generously risked his own life to save mine. But what of my friend Enoch Clayton?"

"Why, that he has been such a gawkey, such a naitral, as

to go security here in England for a Caroliny man, a Swapper, that he knew down east, who has left him in the lurch, and so master Enoch has found his way into the Fleet Prison, that's all. Met his sister, who told me a tarnal long story all about it, and cried a few, I reckon, before she had done it. I told her you were up country, and wouldn't come back to London; but if she finds you're here, joes to coppers, she'll beat up your quarters, and have a pull at your dollars to get brother Enoch out of limbo."

"I shall save her the trouble of finding me out, for I shall immediately go to visit my friend, whose misfortune I am truly sorry to learn."

"The old one! 'Tatoes and codfish! you're joking, surely."

"I never joke, nor if I did would this be an occasion for it."

"Torment us all! who ever heard the like of this? Guess you're mad. Why, boy, he'll pepper your dish for you finely, won't leave you a joe in your purse. Henry, I will never forgive you, if you go nigh him."

"I should be sorry for that, madam, nor can I believe that you would be so unjust; but as I should never forgive myself, were I to desert my friend in his hour of need, I shall instantly proceed to the prison in which he is confined."

"Well, but Henry, boy, don't do any thing rashly, listen to me, sit down a bit; now don't be on the huffy order, and don't put yourself in a passion."

"I am very seldom in a passion, I wish I could say never."

"I want to consult you on a pretty considerable matter, so leave me be, don't interrupt me, and keep coolish a few. Why should we stay to throw away our dollars in London, when I could pack up my duds and be off to-morrow; and I dare say brother Penguin will be offended, if we're tejus in showing ourselves up to Grotto-house. Snecks! why should we idle away more time, 'since the used key is always bright,' as poor Richard says, 'and the sleeping fox catches no poultry, and one to-day is worth two to-morrow.' Guess I sha'n't be sorry to get from this house slick right away, for the servants are little better than down-right Mohawks; never learned their catechise, I reckon, for they can't keep their hands from picking and stealing. One of 'em, like that Injun-looking gal I took from Mr. Briga-

dier Mills, when we were away west on the seaboard-side : what she can't carry away she eats, and what she can't eat she carries away. I wonder whether these creetur's be as tejus in Old England as they are in New. Torment us all ! these helps are the greatest plague in all natur. What say ? don't think they are ?"

"They may be a plague to those who plague them, and this is natural enough ; but in a general way I should affirm, that as good parents make good children, so good masters will always make good servants. If you give lower wages than others, you must expect to hire a person of cheaper moral character, for those who are respectable know their own value ; and if you grudge them their customary perquisites and enjoyments, you should not be surprised if they endeavour to obtain them furtively. Were we not blinded by egotism, we should see that nothing can be more self-convicting than to complain of our servants, since the fault is likely to be our own, in the exact proportion of one to the aggregate number of all those by whom we consider ourselves maltreated. Habitual murmurers of this stamp are only unconsciously exclaiming—Behold ! how sordid, selfish, bad-tempered, and tyrannical must we be ! since the poorest menials, whose palpable interest it is to conciliate our regard, cannot submit to our caprices, cannot even remain under the same roof with us."

"Hear him, hear him ! there you go again ! always taking the part of the tatterpallions, or else 'twouldn't be you. Snecks ! you make quite the mischief among the servants by indulging them. Spile them all, instead of giving them a smart rattling now and then, and making 'em jump about as spry and active as if they were at a husking."

"But what is this important point upon which you wish to consult me ?"

"What *pint*, say ?"

"I said *point*, Madam."

"There you go again ! though you know I hate this new-fangled way of talking, worse than pizon. Why the *pint* is this, boy, that if you go running to help every fool that gets into jail, you'll soon have to keep 'em company, and be the biggest fool of the whole lot. There ! that's into you, I reckon ! keep your cash, and your cash'll keep you ; be surety for no man if you wish to be sure of yourself : they who grant favours will soon have to ask them : 'remember, that a

ploughman on his legs is taller than a nobleman on his knees," as poor Richard says."

"I will remember as much of your good advice as I can, without forgetting what is due to myself, and to such a friend as Enoch Clayton."

"Henry, Henry! only stay to house till to-morrow. Rattlesnakes and ringums! he's gone, or else I'm up a tree! Well, that beats all natur, and it's no more use going to stop him in these fits than 'tis to whistle after a wild Mohawk."

As there was indeed a calmness and decision in Henry's manner, that showed he had made up his mind to a purpose from which it would not be easy to deter him, Mrs. Tenby made no such attempt, and he accordingly quitted the house, and walked at a rapid pace towards the Fleet Prison; thinking with a heavy heart of the misfortune of his young friend, incarcerated in a strange country, and perhaps without a single acquaintance in London to whom he could apply for assistance or advice.

For such meditations, however, but little time was allowed him, for as he was nimble in all his movements, especially when engaged upon any mission of benevolence, he had quickly reached the Fleet Prison. Just as he gained the entrance, his attention was attracted by a young woman, who, while she was being helped to descend from a hackney-coach at the gate, sobbed and wept with an hysterical vehemence that bespoke the utmost extremity of mental anguish. Her dress and appearance, which were not those of a Londoner, but of a respectable country girl, and above all, her evident misery, interested him so deeply, that when she staggered into the lobby, supported by a sheriff's officer, he inquired from one of the under jailers her name, and the cause of her commitment. Referring to the warrant which had been delivered by the bailiff, the man replied that her name was Lucy Hazelgrove, and that she had been arrested for a small debt, at the suit of Mrs. Jane Hudson; adding, that the house from which she came proved her to be "a dead bad one, spite of her whimpering and whining, and all that catterwauling, which in his opinion was nothing in the world but blarney, and sham Abraham."

It was one of Henry's characteristics never to pin his faith upon any man's sleeve, more especially never to trust disparaging assertions upon unsifted evidence, but in all things

to see, inquire, judge, believe, and act for himself. A glimpse of the unfortunate girl's face, whereon were depicted a sorrow and terror that no impostor could assume, instantly chased from his mind all the injurious inuendoes of the jailer ; while the name that he had heard determined him to put some questions to the wretched prisoner. Following her for this purpose into the lobby, he found her leaning upon a small deal-table, with her face buried in her hands, crying piteously, and beating the floor with her feet, in all the passionate impatience of grief."

"My poor girl!" said Henry, in the most soothing voice he could assume, "you seem to be in deep distress; can I do any thing to assist or comfort you?"

No notice was taken of this inquiry, and when he had repeated it in a louder voice, she only replied by an apparently angry shaking of the unlifted head, and a more rapid beating of the feet, as if she despaired of all human succour or consolation.

"Are you Lucy Haselgrove, of Roydon, in the New Forest?" inquired Henry.

At these words the convulsive movements of her body suddenly ceased, she slowly lifted up her head, and throwing aside her dishevelled, tear-wetted locks, fixed her eyes upon Henry with a wild look of inquiry, as if expecting to see a friend; but being unable to recognise his features, she uttered a deep sigh, and again sank down upon the table, faintly sobbing, "Yes, Sir, yes; Lucy Haselgrove, of Roydon."

"And you were about to be married to my friend, Hodge Nettletop, if I am not mistaken? You need not reply; that start and that flush of agitation assure me that I have not been misinformed. Be of good cheer, Lucy, I will release you from this horrid place, I will send you back to your friends at Roydon."

Uttering an hysterical scream of surprise and joy, the poor girl started from her seat, threw herself upon the ground before Henry, passionately exclaiming as she clasped her uplifted hands together, "The Lord of Heaven bless and protect you, dear, good young gentleman! Oh! save me, save me! and I will pray for you to my dying day. Indeed, indeed, Sir, I have been cruelly used. I have been silly, and thoughtless, and misguided enough, God knows! but I never meant any harm. I am innocent, Sir, I am indeed!"

"I firmly believe it from your looks alone," said Henry, stretching out his hand to raise her from the ground. The action, however, was not so kindly taken as it was meant, for the poor girl, recoiling from his touch with a look of distrust, exclaimed—"But who are you, where do you come from, and whither do you want to take me?—I beg your pardon, Sir, I would not give offence—no, not for the world but I have seen enough lately to make me believe that all gentlemen are villains."

Henry quickly succeeded in dispelling these excusable misgivings, not only by a countenance and tone of voice that even to the most suspicious would have carried instant conviction of his benevolence and truth, but by frankly stating his acquaintance with Thaxted and its neighbourhood, and adding, that if Lucy distrusted the motives of his interference, he would immediately withdraw, and intrust her liberation to the agency of his mother. Reassured by these declarations, she implored his pardon, and entreated him not to leave her till he had heard her story, that she might stand justified in his eyes, and prove herself worthy of his generous intentions. It was some little time before her agitation would allow her to proceed, but confidence in Henry's honour, together with the prospect of her liberation and rejoining her friends, having at length restored her to some degree of composure, she was enabled to tell her tale, which, however distressing to herself, presented a scene of male depravity unfortunately but too common. Won by the insidious attentions and flatteries of Captain Frampton, so seductive to a girl in humble life, and trusting to his solemn pledge that he would marry her upon her arrival in the metropolis, the well-meaning, but weak and credulous Lucy, clandestinely quitting her home, travelled in the stage to London. Here she was met by the Captain, who, still deluding her with the prospect of a marriage, placed her in an infamous house, hoping to effect his guilty purposes before she should discover the falsehood and villany of his professions. Accident, however, having revealed the real character of her abode, indignation and horror inspired her with resolution commensurate to her danger; so that the Captain, finding the simple, pliable country-girl transformed into an angry accuser, who defied his detected artifices, and threatened him with a public exposure if he persisted in them, thought it prudent to abandon a project which he now saw

to be both hopeless and hazardous. He accordingly gave her a sum of money to carry her back to Roydon, enjoined a profound secrecy upon all that had occurred, made a lame apology for the part he had acted, which he attributed to her entire misapprehension of his expressions, and immediately afterward quitted London for Norfolk, in company with a sporting companion.

The abandoned woman of the house, however, was not disposed thus to lose an inmate whom she had marked for her victim. Instead of suffering her to depart, she made her a close prisoner; she stole in the night-time the money that had been given to her to convey her home; every art of intimidation, cajolery, and seduction was put in practice to bend the unfortunate Lucy to the purposes of her establishment; and when all failed, the heartless wretch arrested her inmate for board and lodging, partly from a feeling of vindictive disappointment, and partly in the hope that the terrors of a jail would speedily overcome her stubborn scruples.

Such was the substance of the story narrated by Lucy, not without the frequent interruption of tears, self-exculpations, and indignant arrangements of her betrayer. These emotions, however, were trifling in vehemence, compared to the transport of remorse into which she burst, when Henry informed her that Hodge, almost broken-hearted at her inconstancy, had enlisted for a soldier; and when he proceeded to state the manner in which his discharge had been procured, she again threw herself at the feet of his liberator, and actually embraced his knees in the ecstasy of her gratitude. "But, my poor girl," said Henry, as he raised, and replaced her in her chair, "if you were so much attached to young Nettletop, as you appear, how comes it that you deserted him for a comparative stranger?"

"Because, Sir, I was a wicked, wicked, *wicked* girl," sobbed Lucy; "and yet not so wicked neither, but believed it to be my duty, because the Captain,—(a base, false-hearted fellow, how I hate him now!) promised to do great things for our family, and I thought how fine it would be, if I could prevent father, now that he is getting old, from working any more, and let him sit by the fire every day with his pipe and pot of Brackenhurst ale. And then I thought how delighted mother would be to go to church every Sunday in a silk gown, which is what she has set her heart on ever since Mrs. Stubbs had one. And then I thought I would show

Nancy Patching, who was always fleering at me for going to be married to a ploughboy :—Nancy is a very pert, stuck-up-thing, I can assure you, Sir, or else I shouldn't ha' cared—I thought I would show her that I might have a finer gentleman for my husband than ever she could. But I'm sure I cried all the way to Lunnun for thinking of poor Hodge, and now I've lost him for ever, and it serves me quite right, for I'm a very vain, good-for-nothing, silly, wicked, wicked girl."

Here she burst into a fresh passion of grief, which Henry tried to assuage, by assuring her that her subsequent resolution and good conduct had done much to atone for her first imprudence, and that her future life might, perhaps, be rendered more happy, through the stability of character which her present painful experience would create.

Under the impression that his imprisoned friend might require some immediate pecuniary supply, Henry had, previously to his leaving home, replenished his purse. With this money he now discharged the demand against Lucy, and bidding her remain in the lobby till he returned, proceeded into the interior of the prison, where he quickly recognised Enoch Clayton, who, from the intelligence he had received of his absence in the country, was not less surprised than delighted to see him. Though the sum for which that young man had become security, to oblige a friend, did not exceed his ultimate means, it was beyond the reach of his available resources, and his imprisonment must have continued till his funds became disposable, for he was almost a total stranger in England. Henry was the more rejoiced to find that the amount was within the compass of his own fortune, and though it very nearly exhausted the little accumulations of his minority, he gave an order upon his agent for the sum with much greater pleasure than most men would have felt in doubling their property, instead of reducing it to a mere trifle.

Much as they had to say to one another, the colloquy of the friends was a short one ; for Henry felt that Lucy was in no fitting state of mind to be left, nor did he like that she should be exposed to the impertinent curiosity, or coarse ribaldry of the inferior prison officers. Taking, therefore, a hasty leave of his friend, after having given him his address at Grotto-house, he returned to the lobby, ordered a hackney-coach to be called, and had the pleasure, which none

but hearts like his can experience in all its exquisiteness, of handing Lucy into it, freed for ever from the clutches of her infamous landlady, and uncontaminated by any acquaintance with the corrupting interior of a jail. The words "flat!" and "bubble!" muttered by some of the bystanders around the lobby met his ear more than once; while others, who considered him to be the dupe rather than the dupe, intimidated by significant winks to one another, that they attributed his conduct to any thing rather than the benevolent feelings in which it originated; but in the conscious rectitude of his own motives, Henry despised covert surmises, as he would equally have done open accusations; and nothing, therefore, disturbed the pure complacency of his heart as he drove towards his mother's lodgings.

Not a single particle of complacency entered into the feelings of that lady when Henry, after having left Lucy in another room, went into the parlour to communicate what he had done, and to bespeak his mother's kindness for their new and most unexpected inmate. Averse as she knew him to be in general from joke and banter, she could not but imagine him to be indulging some momentary *badinage*, under which impression she exclaimed, "Snecks! Henry, old birds, like me, are not to be caught with chaff! You're poking fun at me, I know you are; for you would never be such a tarnal simpleton, as to be gudgeoned by a common trull and tramp. Guess you're a little on the bamboozling order this morning."

"I am sorry, Madam, that you should think me capable of uttering an untruth even in jest; still more so that you should imagine poor Lucy to be an improper character; and in order to prove to you that you have done us both an injustice, I shall take leave to introduce her to your acquaintance."

He was leaving the room for the purpose of conducting Lucy into it, when Mrs. Tenby, who saw at once that he was in earnest, laid her hand upon his shoulder, and gently staying him—for she knew that persuasion was much more likely than imperative demeanour to succeed with one of so decided a character—implored him to furnish her some farther explanations before he brought the creature into her presence. These were readily given; and it was with no small satisfaction that she learned the trifling amount of the debt discharged, though she failed not to enlarge upon the

gross imprudence of bringing the girl to the house; a proceeding which was sure to subject him to all sorts of calumnious imputation from the illiberal."

"I reverence public opinion too much," said Henry, "to defy it needlessly. The fear of its censure is most salutary; it is a sort of external conscience that deters many a man from open misconduct, as the inward conscience dissuades him from even concealed offence. But there should be bounds to its influence; and many occasions may arise wherein a man ought to have moral courage enough to disregard it. I have brought Lucy hither, because I know no other roof beneath which she could be placed without incurring a danger from which I am determined to snatch her. Any one may defame me and my motives, but no one can make me infamous but myself; and while I have the approbation of my own heart, I may well despise the calumnies of the profligates and slanderers who judge of others by themselves."

"Snecks! what a tarnal lengthy speech: got it out of a book, that's my guess. Well, boy, I know there's no more turning you from your purposes, however mischievous they may be, than one can turn a bear out of a hemlock wood; and so the creature shall sleep here to-night, and I will consent that she shall accompany us to Thaxted, upon one condition, and that is, that we start by the coach to-morrow morning."

This proposition was a little finesse on the part of Mrs. Tenby, who possessed a certain degree of cunning which she mistook for acuteness. As Henry had said nothing about Enoch Clayton, she concluded that he had been altogether forgotten in the absorbing interest excited by Lucy; and knowing that his generosity would prompt him to liberate the man who had once ventured his life for him, she had assented to his wishes, trusting that her stipulation for departing on the morrow would prevent all interview between the friends, and save Henry's finances from the threatened assault. She would not even trust him out of her sight during the remainder of the evening, but sent the servant to secure places in the stage-coach, which, on the following day, conveyed them all three in perfect safety to Thaxted.

That Lucy and her lover may not call upon us for any farther notice, we may here state, that Henry made it his first business to see honest Hodge, and having restated the

Malthusian theory, by which he pronounced his auditor to be unjustified in marrying, considering his little prospect of maintaining a family, he proceeded to relate Lucy's history, extenuating her indiscretion, extolling the courage and firmness which had fortunately enabled her to return to Roydon as pure and virtuous as when she had quitted it, and prophesying, that the experience she had gained would render her more prudent and steady than ever she had been before.

"As to muster Malthouse," said Hodge in reply, "him and me doesn't agree; seeing whereby, that as our fathers and mothers married afore we, why shouldn't us marry a'ter they; and that, I look upon't, there's no answering. But as to what you say about Lucy's being all the better for this little freak, why, there's some gumption in it, and I'll give you a proof on't. Did you know Farmer Patching's swish-tail gray mare, that he used to drive in a chay-cart? Well, we put her to plough one day, and she kicked, and plunged, and got loose, and jumped over hedge and ditch, and ran off, and two days after we found her in Shirley Pound. Heart alive, Sir! that day's nonsense cured her of all her tantrums for ever; for she had torn her shoulder, cut her fetlock, and had little or no feed the whole time; so, when she came back, she took to plough as if she had been used to it all her life. I drive her now sometimes as leader, with two yoke of oxen, and a quieter beast never touched collar."

Henry did not offer to dispute the justice of Hodge's conclusions respecting Lucy, drawn from the premises of Farmer Patching's gray mare. He had performed what he considered to be his duty, in advising him to defer his marriage until he should be in more prosperous circumstances; but as Hodge was anxious to hasten the wedding, and Lucy, grateful for his kindness and constancy, interposed no obstacle, the ceremony was soon after performed. Henry was present at the solemnity, and we have much pleasure in recording, before we proceed with our history, that his predictions and Hodge's, as to the future good conduct of Lucy, were abundantly justified by the event.

CHAPTER VI.

To show in what manner they felt, when they placed themselves, by the power of imagination, in trying circumstances, in the conflicts of duty and passion, or the strife of contending duties; what sort of loves and enmities theirs were; how their griefs were tempered, and their full swollen joys abated; how much of Shakspeare shines in the great men his contemporaries, and how far, in his divine mind and manners, he surpassed them and all mankind.

CHARLES LAMB.

Mrs. PENGUIN and Mrs. Tenby might be considered as not unapt representatives of the different styles of beauty in English and American women of middle age. The former, who was indeed so much younger than her visitant, that she would have spurned the indefinite term by which we have signified her to be no longer in the first bloom of youth, was plump almost to an undue rotundity of figure, with a fine blooming complexion, blue eyes, and light hair; a combination which, in the country circles, had procured for her the reputation of a *belle*, though in London she would hardly have obtained any higher praise than that of being a handsome, rustic-looking woman. However brightly the roses might have once flourished in Mrs. Tenby's cheeks, they had now withered, leaving her oval-shaped face and still handsome features of a clear and uniform, but somewhat sallow hue, relieved, however, by a pair of sparkling dark eyes, and tresses rather remarkable for their glossy raven hue than their profusion. In figure she was tall and thin, exhibiting at the same time a more sinewy strength than accords with English notions of feminine delicacy and beauty.

Little as was the external resemblance between the two ladies, there was still less consimilarity in their characters, and it might therefore have been surmised, that the compact of amity, composed of such discordant elements, would not be of very long continuance; but Mrs. Tenby, being by no means of an unaccommodating disposition where her interests were concerned, and having, moreover, too great a reverence for poor Richard's maxims to quarrel with her bread-

and-butter, felt not the smallest disposition to sacrifice her gratuitous peek and perch, (to use her own phrase,) from considerations of idle punctilio. Having penetration enough to discover from a few casual hints which Mrs. Penguin suffered to escape on the subject of her dialect and her dress, the real state of that lady's feelings towards her, she prudently resolved to remove all objections that might interfere with the length of her visit. As to her language, indeed, she declared it to be the true "raal old Virginny," which, in spite of all Henry's attempts at its correction, she would not and could not adapt to the foolish fashions of the Old Englanders; but as to her economical mode of dressing, that should not annoy any body; she had no money, not she, to throw away upon the extravagant vagaries of fashion; she hated visitors and visiting; if they would only "leave her be," and give her a room to herself, she would retire to it when strangers came to the house, decline all invitations in which she might be included, and interfere with nobody, since there was nothing she liked so much as a quiet domestic life. In the apprehension that even these concessions might not be considered sufficient, she took care to hold out a prospect of her removal, without however pledging herself to any definite period.

All the facilities towards a mutual good understanding, and her own lengthened visit, which the prudent Mrs. Tenby was thus anxious to afford, were in danger of being rendered nugatory by a most unexpected allusion to the scantiness of her own finances, and the still more limited means of Henry. Much as Mrs. Penguin had been captivated by the latter in their short acquaintance, her more influencing motives for inviting him to the house had been the belief in his wealth, the probability that this would be attested by some sort of equipage and display, and the prospect of the gentility which would be reflected upon themselves from such respectable and opulent connexions. To have this glittering day-dream kicked down at once, like the golden reverie of Alnaschar; to find that Mrs. Tenby possessed but a very moderate share of fortune to atone for her liberal portion of vulgarity, was indeed a sore trial for Mrs. Penguin's patience; while even those personal recommendations of Henry, which had in the first instance so won upon her heart, seemed to lose some portion of their bloom, beauty, and wonder, now that she contemplated him as a comparative pauper, instead of his

being gifted with all the fascinations and magical influences which she attributed to the young and handsome possessor of a large fortune.

Aware that she herself had been the principal agent in circulating the rumour of Henry's opulence throughout the neighbourhood, and magnifying its amount, she determined to shift the responsibility as much as possible from her own shoulders, by throwing the whole blame upon her hapless husband. Thus inculpated, the poor geologist repeated in his defence the exact words made use of by Henry, namely, that he was in independent circumstances, a phrase upon which his wife had built up a superstructure not less magnificent than visionary, but which Mrs. Tenby demolished in an instant, by declaring that Henry, utterly incapable of any misrepresentation, even by innuendo, still less of a direct falsehood, was of such unexpensive habits, and of so philosophical a turn of mind, that he considered a hundred a year a perfect independence. True as this might be, she added, so far as his own personal wants were concerned, the term could scarcely be applied with propriety to any one who, like Henry, was apt to consider the need of others much more than his own.

All this afforded little consolation to Mrs. Penguin, who, in addition to her immediate sources of vexation foresaw, that she would be placed in a very awkward dilemma, when the vulgarity of Mrs. Tenby and the poverty of Henry should be bruited about the neighbourhood. She felt that she occupied a false position in society, and was exposed to all the annoyances that such a situation was sure to engender. In fact, she feared any imputation, of whatever nature, that might occasion a scrutiny into her early life, since the divulgement of that ante-connubial lapse from virtue, to which we have already slightly alluded, but which she had hitherto succeeded in keeping a profound secret, would probably occasion her instant exclusion from those circles into which she had crept, at no small expense of time and trouble. Any such discovery, too, was likely to mar for ever her projects of getting her husband's whole fortune secured to her by will. This was the real motive of all her affected fondness, of her feigned subservience but real domination; for her extravagance and love of pleasure rendered money necessary to her, and the great disparity of their ages authorized her in looking forward to a period when she should be enabled to

enjoy the wealth she coveted, and follow the impulses of her passions, without the incumbrance of an old husband.

On all these accounts she felt the predicament in which she was placed to be a very delicate one, and even began to question the necessity, or at all events, the prudence, of undeceiving the neighbourhood as to Henry's imputed wealth. To sustain the delusion, however, it was necessary that he himself should become an accessory in her plans, a point which she lost all hope of accomplishing from the first moment after having stated the dilemma in which she had unwittingly placed herself. "No consideration on earth," said Henry, "shall ever induce me to lend myself to the establishment of an erroneous impression; believing, as I do, that he who is ashamed of his poverty would be proud of his riches, I could have no wish to conceal my real circumstances. When, therefore, I said I was in independent circumstances, I used a common, but foolish, because indefinite phrase; I should have stated my real income; for where misconstruction may arise, we cannot be too explicit. I am sorry for the misapprehension to which I have so unintentionally given rise, and as my silence might occasion its continuance, I shall omit no opportunity of explaining and correcting it."

Mrs. Penguin, who had tact enough to perceive that he was inexorable in all his rightful purposes, did not ask him, as she had first intended, to collude with her in supporting the false opinion of his wealth, especially as he offered to take upon his own shoulders the whole blame of the mistake that had sprung from his ambiguous expression. Vexed as she was at his determination to undeceive the neighbourhood, she could not help respecting the uncompromising firmness of his character, contrasting, as it did, with the weak pliability of her husband, whom she could mould to any purpose that she pleased, and whom she secretly despised even for yielding to her own caprices.

It has been said, that the faulty invariably hate those who, being free from their own errors, offer to them a perpetual though involuntary reproach. This is not always the case. Mrs. Penguin, for instance, who was herself a most lax observer of the truth, could not help honouring Henry on account of his scrupulous regard for veracity, as much as she had admired him for his inflexibility of purpose. Being herself a woman of strong, though unregulated and misdirected

mind, she could sympathize to a certain extent with one whose energies were devoted to better purposes. Penguin's frivolity and imbecility, when brought in daily and immediate contrast with Henry's superior faculties and personal recommendations, seemed to justify her increasing contempt of her husband, and almost to sanction that growing attachment for their visitant which she now began to indulge with all the recklessness of an unprincipled mind, and all the ardour of a prurient temperament. At first, indeed, she had abandoned herself to her infatuation without contemplating any thing criminal, but she felt not the smallest disposition to check her career, even when she saw that it pointed to a guilty conclusion. The prospect of this consummation, however, worked a very marked change in her demeanour, for whereas, she had hitherto been open and unguarded in her familiar intercourse with the object of her undeveloped affection, calling him always Henry, or dear Henry, and suffering the presence of her husband to make no alteration in her deportment, she began, when her passion assumed an illicit character, to exhibit a pointed coldness and reserve towards him when Penguin was in the apartment, generally terming him Mr. Melcomb, and often affecting an indifference that seemed to be altogether unconscious of his presence. In the hearing of her spouse, too, she became more than usually moral and sentimental, inveighing with great bitterness against those female delinquents who proved unfaithful to their marriage vows; thanking heaven that she was blessed with a good husband, and generally ending with some virtuous and sententious precept in the Joseph Surface vein, which hypocritical assumptions of superior morality were as regularly followed by the usual ejaculations from the husband of "faithful creature!"—"high principled woman!" and "exemplary wife!"

For the constraint thus put upon her feelings she took ample satisfaction when alone with Henry, by giving him to understand her thorough contempt for her husband, to which, as her depraved wishes gathered strength, she added such lures, blandishments, and seductive fascinations, as she thought best calculated to inflame his passions, and win him to her purposes. That he would have scruples of conscience, that he would not be entrapped without a struggle to escape, she fully expected, from that high principle of honour and sacred respect for virtue, which, upon all occasions, he ex-

hibited, and which, in so young a man, she set down for a squeamish and fastidious puritanism. She relied, however, upon her powers of inveiglement, against which she believed that no puritan, more especially a young one, could be proof; and perhaps it might have been difficult to find another who would have resisted her temptations with such an invincible firmness as Henry. Such, indeed, was the simplicity of his own heart, that for a long time, however he might be surprised at her inconsistent laxity of discourse and demeanour, he was preserved from her bewitchments by not understanding their aim and import. Henry, moreover, had a deep, heart-pervading reverence for the female character, looking upon woman as the redeeming portion of humanity, whose purity, disinterestedness, truth, and sweetness, hallowed our common nature, and made angelic expiation for the grossness, the vices, and the grovelling propensities of the other sex. Woman was to him a sort of earthly deity, whom it was religion to love with that ennobling worship which is alone worthy of its object when it leads to an imitation of her virtues. He could not have outlived his solemn convictions of the general purity and truth of woman, without feeling that his own blood was polluted; that all the beauty and blossom of life, all the charms and sanctities of existence had withered away; that hope and joy were for ever dead within him; that he had, in fact, survived his own heart.

Cherishing in his bosom such a high and holy faith in female virtue, he did not for some time suspect the nature of the advances by which he was assailed; though he had no sooner marked the inconsistency of Mrs. Penguin's demeanour when in the presence or in the absence of her husband, than he began to despise her for her hypocrisy, and to avoid, with an instinctive apprehension, those opportunities for their being left alone together, which she was perpetually seeking to create. Henry was not insensible (what young man ever was so?) to the influences of female beauty, especially when all its blandishments and allurements were put forth to captivate him; but his exalted sense of honour, his unassailable steadfastness of principle, would not allow him to regard the wife of the friend in whose house he was living, with any other admiration than that which he might have innocently bestowed upon a beautiful statue. It was, besides, the moral, rather than the personal attractions of woman, that capti-

vated his regard ; when this sanctifying grace was gone, nothing beautiful was left ; and to be a confessed wanton was, in the eyes of Henry, to be no less repulsive in person than hateful in mind.

Never, therefore, would he have fallen a victim to the seduction of an adulteress, even had not his bosom at this period become gradually sanctified by a pure love, calculated to expel from it every licentious thought. Short as had been his abode in London, and actively as he had been employed, his mind had perpetually reverted to Emily Welbeck ; to their pleasant rambles in the neighbourhood of Southampton ; to their brief interviews at Thaxted ; to the universal and enthusiastic praises that attested her amiability, charity, and virtue ; to the mournful, deserted-looking old Manor-house wherein she lived in almost cloistered sequestration : to the patient sorrow that sate upon the marble beauty of her features. Such a combination as this was especially adapted to address itself to the heart and the imagination of Henry. Happy and obtrusive beauty might have won his passing admiration, but meek loveliness pining in seclusion, and apparently striving to alleviate its secret grief by the practice of benevolence towards others, and a filial devotedness to an eccentric, unamiable father. presented a union of duty, of charms, and of sorrow, which, when it had once taken possession of his bosom, speedily entwined itself around every fibre of his heart. It may hardly be necessary therefore to state, that the Manor-house was one of the first places which he visited after his return to Thaxted ; and yet he did not venture upon this measure without some degree of apprehension, for understanding Welbeck to be a wayward and capricious being, who formed sudden dislikes, and stood not upon the smallest ceremony in expressing them, he dreaded lest a splenetic interdict should be put upon his future visits. By a fortunate chance, Welbeck was not only in a gracious mood when he called, but disposed to be particularly cordial towards one who had in some degree advanced his interests, by being an active supporter of the fair. Henry was farthermore destined to be lucky in this visit, at least in the first part of it, by ingratiating himself upon another subject. A volume of plays which Emily had been reading to her father occasioned the conversation to turn upon the dramatists of the olden times ; Welbeck exclaimed, with an elevation of style, and an animated manner

that seldom failed him when discussing such topics, "Ha, Sir! do you talk of the mighty masters, of the spirit-stirring magicians, of the intellectual giants who immediately preceding, or accompanying the advent of our glorious Shakespeare, wielded the human passions like thunderbolts, electrifying with fire and light the new mental world that they had created? What should you know of those stars of the poetical sky? how can you appreciate the beauty of the spheres in which they moved? you who, in our first interview, professed yourself to be an utilitarian, and who therefore, as I presume, would measure every thing by the mechanical line and rule of dry usefulness, or reduce it to a precise standard of value; you who would, doubtless, share the sentiment of the elder Knowell in the play, when he condemned his son for

— ' Dreaming on nought but idle poetry,
That useless and unprofitable art,
Good unto none, but least to the professors!'

And yet, Sir, if you can speak admiringly of these divine artists, there may be ultimate hope of you, even when you would depreciate their art."

"You have quite mistaken me," said Henry; "I spoke of the admiration they had excited in others rather than in myself; for my education in a remote settlement in America has prevented my ever having had access to these writers, nor did I undervalue their art when it is directed, as it ever should be, to high moral purposes. Most true it is, that I prefer the useful learning which, when it enlightens our understanding, may enable us practically to meliorate the lot of humanity, to those vain studies which feed the vanity of erudition, although their empty sound is but as that of a tinkling cymbal."

"Why, this is something, young man, but we will not be content with so poor and cold a suffrage. I will lend you some of these noble old dramatists. See! do they not look venerable upon yonder shelf, those goodly quartos in their plain dark covers? You shall read them, that, instead of this negative praise, you may have warrant for becoming a true and zealous worshipper of poetry. If you like spirit-stirring themes, that shall make your heart leap as at the blast of a trumpet; if you ever wish to escape from yourself, to tear

away your thoughts from remorse for the past, or apprehension for the future, this should be your only reading."

"Possessing my soul in uninterrupted tranquillity, I need not any stimulants to draw me from self-reflection, nor do I find any delight in the tumult of violent sensations. That is to me the best poetry which, appealing to the heart rather than to the head or the imagination, incites us through its pleasurable medium to the performance of our duties; teaching us, that the purest and most acceptable homage which we can offer to the Deity, is to love and benefit, to the utmost of our ability, all our fellow-creatures."

"I fear, Sir," said Emily, addressing herself to Henry, "that so far from finding that pure and lofty morality, which I agree with you in thinking the noblest consummation of poetry, you will, when perusing our older dramatists, discover much to pardon in the grossness of an imperfectly civilized age. I am myself often revolted, nor should I ever take down these volumes but to oblige my dear father, who dotes upon them, to the exclusion of all other literature."

"Why, my child, why? Because they are the sole magicians, whose potent spells can silence the whisperings that I would not hear, can cast forth devils from my bosom, can conjure me for a while out of myself, can even sometimes—"

"And yet," exclaimed Emily, eagerly interrupting her father, as if anxious to prevent the conclusion of his speech, "Mr. Melcomb will find little of this potent agency in the simple and unimpassioned Heywood, whose plays I hold in my hand. He will say, perhaps, that he occasionally exalts his heroines to a romantic and unnatural pitch of excellence; but this is surely a generous and pardonable fault, springing as it does from the enthusiasm of virtue. If writers cannot paint our frail humanity as it really is, it is better for all parties that women should be drawn as angels rather than as devils; and I should not like Mr. Melcomb to begin with any author that might give disparaging notions of our sex."

The sudden thought, that what she had been saying might be construed to have some oblique reference to herself and her auditor, brought a blush over the transparent alabaster of her features, as she cast her eyes timidly down to the ground. Henry, who fully appreciated the delicacy and purity of her sentiments, thought, as he gazed upon her, that he had never seen a more bewitching union of moral and

personal beauty; and it was therefore with a correspondent admiration and earnestness that he exclaimed ;—" Entertain no apprehensions on my account, for you yourself have furnished me a sufficient antidote against any such poisonous insinuations. In all things I endeavour to think and act for myself; and upon this point, more than any other, I will never, never suffer myself to be seduced from my faith!"

An ennobling sentiment, of whatever nature, instantly affected the feelings of Emily, accustomed as she was to hear few from her father, but such as were of a grovelling and misanthropical tendency. Upon the present occasion, her heart swelled with a proud pleasure, and a tear trembled beneath their lids as she raised her eyes, and threw a timid but approving glance at Henry. Momentary as it was, it conveyed the whole history of her heart. It was so felt and so understood by Henry; and from that instant, though their passion had never been translated into words, they knew themselves to be mutual lovers.

To relieve herself from the embarrassing silence that ensued, Emily plunged into another subject, talking eagerly, and at first not very coherently, about the occurrences at Hordle Cliff, the return of Lucy Hazelgrove to her friends, and her reconciliation with young Nettletope, of all which she had heard, and had been delighted beyond measure with Henry's generous conduct in those transactions, though she dared not trust her tongue with any present expression of her approbation. Her companion was but too happy to prolong the conversation, whatever turn it might take, especially as they now pursued it without interruption from Welbeck, who, as soon as they ceased discoursing on the old dramatists, sat apart, in a silent, moody abstraction, which gradually assumed the appearance of a painful, agitating reverie. His brows were knit together, he gazed around him, sometimes with a vacant scowl, sometimes with a look of restless, searching apprehension; he bit his lips, his hands clenched and opened themselves as if involuntarily, he uttered a half-suppressed groan, and, starting from his chair, paced up and down the room with hurried steps and a bewildered air. Emily, who, notwithstanding her delighted interest in the conversation she was maintaining, had anxiously watched her father's rising emotions, took down a playbook that had been promised to Henry, and presented it to him as if to intimate that he should depart. This he

was about to do, when Welbeck, intercepting him in his progress towards the door abruptly, exclaimed, "You have forests in America, have you not, young man? vast, dark, primeval, boundless forests, almost impenetrable, or at least but rarely trodden by any human foot. Now and then, as I have been told, some forlorn wretch, who hath within him 'undivulged crimes, unwhipt of justice,' will betake himself to these silent wildernesses, and, being safe from the pursuit of avenging man, and brought into communion with Nature in all her loneliness and sublimity, will escape from the tormenting stings of conscience, and even taste tranquillity, if not happiness."

"I do not think," replied Henry, "that solitude is good for man, whether innocent or guilty. I have heard of gloomy, and, perhaps, criminal beings who, having fled into the sombre depths of forests, have been so maddened into misanthropy, that they have waged indiscriminate war against their species, until they themselves were finally hunted down like wild beasts. Of some, however, I have been told, who, turning anchorites, have found in those woody recesses a peace and repose that were denied to them in the world: and I can well believe it; for I imagine that any offender who is sincerely contrite, and has atoned for his misdeeds to the utmost of his ability, may commit himself, even to a lonely hermitage, with a fair prospect of being reconciled to Heaven and to himself."

"No, no, not for me is there any such hope, never, never!" muttered Welbeck, in a tone and with a look of fierce bitterness. "The dreariest desert and the most forlorn wilderness would reject him who has the eldest first-born curse upon his head."

"Here is the book, Sir, here," said Emily, in much agitation, speaking loud, as if to drown her father's voice, and hurrying Henry towards the door, which she hastily shut behind her, and then continued in a lower tone. "You must take no notice of my dear father, nor pay the smallest heed to what he says, should you ever see him in these moods, for his feelings are so sensitive, and are sometimes thrown into such a state of morbid excitement by poring upon these dramas, that as he quotes the passages that have struck him, he will almost fancy himself the real character he is representing, and be as much overcome as if he had actually committed the crimes of these tragic heroes. It is a distressing

sensibility, and as it has given rise to much idle talk, you need not mention what you have seen or heard. Good morning, Sir, good morning; excuse this unceremonious dismissal. I must return to my dear father; he will be quite calm again when the momentary illusion has passed away."

Henry took his leave, and Emily was about to hasten back, when she saw old Wiverley, the clerk, approaching with a letter. Not choosing that he should see her father in his present agitated state, she said she would herself deliver the letter, and returned into the parlour for that purpose. Welbeck had sunk into a chair, exhausted by the vehemence of his emotions; his head was resting on his hand, and the perspiration was visible upon his forehead. As his daughter entered, he raised himself upright in his seat, and pressing his hand upon his bosom, said in a low, hollow voice,

"Astonishment,
Fear and amazement, beat upon my heart,
Even as a madman beats upon a drum."

Thinking it might turn the current of his thoughts, she placed the letter before him, when he exclaimed with a start—"Ha! has the post come in? Where are the newspapers? where are the newspapers?"

"I suppose the servant is drying them below; I dare say they will be brought up presently."

"Child, child! let them be given to me instantly, whether wet or dry. I will break no seal, I will read nothing till I have seen them." As he spoke he rang the bell with a fretful impatience, not new to Emily, who, although she was utterly unable to divine the reason, knew that her unhappy parent had, for many years, daily pored over the advertisements in the papers with a tremulous anxiety, and was ever nervous and irritable until he had completed this process. The papers were brought to him; he ran over the advertisements in a rapid general glance at first, and then deliberately one by one, appearing to breathe more freely, and to wear a more composed and assured look when he had gone through them all. After a pause of some continuance, during which he seemed to be struggling to throw off the dismal dreams by which he had been oppressed, he opened the letter, his countenance brightening, and his voice

again becoming animated, as he exclaimed, "Emy, my darling, these are pleasant tidings, and they come at a seasonable moment to dispel these hypochondriacal visions by which I am haunted. Here is a letter from the Earl of Latchmore ; Lord Fawley is better, there are even hopes that he may recover without proceeding to the South of Europe. Ha ! this is well, this is well ! my plans for advancement, the hopes of my latter life, the reward of all my sufferings, of all my offences, shall yet be realized, and I shall not have coiled snakes round my heart in vain ! My desk, my desk ! I will write instantly to the Earl to congratulate him ; and mind, Emy, that we drink poor Fawley's health after dinner. Were it the last glass that I should ever taste, I would quaff it cheerfully to such a toast.—Quick, quick ! my desk !"

CHAPTER V.

This my mean task would be
 As heavy to me as 'tis odious, but
 The mistress whom I serve quickens what's dead,
 Oh ! she is
 Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,
 And he's composed of harshness.

THE TEMPEST.

NOTHING so much sharpens the apprehension, nothing renders a man more quick-sighted and penetrative, than love. In general, it might be said that Henry was slow to perceive and take advantage of circumstances that tended merely to his own benefit, but no sooner did he discover that he might obtain an easy passport to the Manor-house, through the medium of these old plays, than he began to study them with a diligence in which his heart had at least as much share as his head. From Emily's conversation, as well as from what he had himself observed, he gathered, that although Welbeck might be occasionally excited and overcome by certain passages appealing to some secret remorse or fear that disturbed his conscience, he in general derived a solace from the perusal of these works, since they could frequently ab-

tract him from himself, without touching the sore place in his heart. By attending to this peculiarity, by selecting for the subjects of his conversation such plays as were conversant with the gentler passions, and avoiding the more revolting scenes of crime, anguish, and remorse, he contrived to engage Welbeck in long and frequent dramatic discussions, with only very rare ebullitions of the passionate and self-accusing nature, which we described in our last chapter. When these did occur, Henry instantly withdrew from the room, so that Welbeck, not less pleased with the discretion, than with the intelligence and ardour of his young pupil, for such he called him, invited him frequently to the house, and seemed never more happy than when he could closet him in his own little room over the entrance porch, and take down, for their morning's lecture, some dark old quarto, from amid the loaded fire-arms which this singular and suspicious being constantly kept ready for his defence, though no one but himself ever dreamt of attack or danger.

In the part that Henry thus acted, there was nothing disingenuous, nothing inconsistent with the strictest veracity, for he neither praised nor censured, except in perfect accordance with his own convictions. Although he wished to ingratiate himself with his companion, and almost feared to irritate by contradiction a temper so morbidly sensitive, he neither scrupled to differ from him at times, nor to maintain his own opinions, temperately but firmly; and Welbeck, who, like all strong-minded men, hated servile assentations, and liked a controversy, however earnest and eager, upon a favourite topic, loved his pupil the better for his independent way of thinking, and his courage and talent in asserting it. Upon subjects essentially dramatic, such as the beauty of the language, the skill with which the characters or the fable were developed, or the merits of the respective authors, they seldom differed; for Henry, mistrusting his own judgment, was willing to defer to one whose reading had been so much more extensive; but upon points of morality they generally disagreed, and as Henry would not recede an inch from any position of this nature that he had once taken, their discussions sometimes became sufficiently warm and animated to assume the appearance of disputes, and to alarm the timid Emily. Welbeck was of a misanthropical turn, ever imputing the most sordid and selfish motives to the actions of mankind, and maintaining, that as life was a mere struggle,

a sort of gladiatorial arena, in which each individual must either conquer or be crushed, every man was justified in waging a self-defensive war against his species. This he affirmed to be the general system of Nature, appealing, in confirmation, to the animal world, where each class preyed incessantly upon the other, and mutual destruction was the ordained system of existence. "Or, if you want human testimony," would he sometimes exclaim with a peculiar taunting tone, that left it in doubt whether he spoke seriously or ironically, "What say the masters, the moral dissectors, who have probed humanity to the quick, and found it rotten?" And he would then pour forth misanthropical quotations from the rich dramatic storehouse of his memory, with a profusion, and in a triumphant mood, that were apparently meant to overwhelm his young opponent.

Henry, however, who was not of a disposition to be either hoodwinked by sophistry, or silenced by declamation, exposed the fallacy of imputing to an author the immoral sentiments which he might think it characteristic to assign to rogues and fools, who were besides generally self-punished by their profligacy; he eagerly upheld the nobleness and dignity of man, and stigmatized the slanderous insinuations of the misanthropist, as treason against human nature, and a blaspheming of the Deity, by disparaging his most perfect work, the only one formed in his own image.

With these sentiments, however diametrically opposed to his own, Welbeck did not seem to be seriously offended, though he might warmly controvert them; viewing them rather, with a compassionate regard, as the generous delusion of inexperienced youth, confessing that he had once entertained somewhat similar notions himself, and predicting that time and intercourse with the world would turn all this milk of human kindness into bitterness, just as sweet wine is changed into vinegar by age and exposure to the elements. With some such sinister prophecy he generally concluded the discussion, never closing it, however, without inviting his opponent to an early renewal of his visit.

At these colloquies Emily was often present, sometimes taking a share in them, though her timid, retiring nature, and her dread of her father's morbid excitability, rarely allowed her to follow up her arguments in defence of human virtue with half the zeal that she felt. So earnest an advocate as Henry, however, needed no coadjutor; and she was well

content to sit listening to his noble sentiments, her countenance beaming with a radiant satisfaction, and her heart throbbing with an emotion that often brought tears of pleasure into her eyes, at the expression of his high and holy thoughts, every one of which, as it fell from his lips, struck and thrilled upon a correspondent chord within her own bosom. Sometimes, when he called at the Manor-house, the Justice would be absent in the performance of his magisterial duties, or on other affairs of business; and upon these occasions the young lovers, for such they had now decidedly become, unassailed by any worldly or hateful maxims that might clash with their congenial sympathies, indulged in an unrestrained interchange of thought, probing one another's minds, and each mind becoming daily more enamoured of the purity, disinterestedness, benignity, and exalted virtue that it discovered in the other. Where there are differences to adjust, dissimilarities to reconcile, or any contrarieties of character to bring into harmony, love is slow and balancing in its progress; but where it springs from a kindred excellence, and a perfect congeniality of thought and feeling, it is generally of rapid growth. Such was the progress of the passion that had sprung up to maturity and deeply rooted itself in the bosoms of Henry and Emily, in a space of time that would have been inadequate to the production of such an effect, but for its affinity with the soil that produced it, and with the elements by which it was nurtured.

It has been said, in the earlier part of our history, that Henry was a convert to the doctrines of Malthus: and as he disdained to inculcate a moral restraint that he did not practise, he would not have held himself warranted to marry, if the incompetency of his means rendered it probable that the community might be burthened to support his family, should he have one. This consideration alone, by whatever temptations to love he might have been assailed, would have deterred him from bestowing his affections upon a person no richer than himself; but in the case of Miss Welbeck, whose father was notoriously wealthy, such an objection could not apply. Lamentably deficient in worldly wisdom, and considering rather the abstract fitness of things, than the usages of society, especially of the opulent, he deemed it fortunate that Welbeck could help out his scanty income with such a portion to Emily as might raise it to a competency. What its amount should be, was to himself perfectly indif-

ferent ; upon this point he was willing to refer every thing to the generosity of Welbeck, or the wishes of his daughter ; and knowing himself to be utterly incapable of fostering a single sordid or selfish thought, it never entered into the contemplation of the single-hearted Henry, that such motives might be imputed to him, or that there could be any impropriety in his becoming a candidate for Miss Welbeck's hand.

Sanctioned as he thus considered it to be by principle, as well as favoured by circumstances, he abandoned himself to the fascinating impulses of a first love, though not without occasionally feeling its anxieties and misgivings. Rumours of Emily's intended marriage to Lord Fawley had not been whispered about the neighbourhood without reaching his ear, for he had now become inquisitive as to every thing that bore reference to his passion ; but the report of his Lordship's alarming illness and intended departure for the continent, dispelled his apprehensions ; nor could he believe that Emily, the very soul of sincerity and truth, if she had been betrothed to another, would have bestowed upon him those little tokens of preference and regard, which, however unimportant in their nature, and however consistent with the most bashful modesty and reserve, carried a sweet and secret conviction to his heart, that he was not altogether indifferent to her.

His confidence in the integrity of his mistress was soon to be put to a severer trial than any that might arise from the circulation of these blind rumours. Mrs. Penguin, whose criminal passion had been daily gathering strength since Henry had become an inmate of Grotto-house, and whose faculties were sharpened by suspicion, was not long in discovering the secret attraction that carried him so often to visit the Welbecks, of which she had no sooner detected the real motive, than with all the vindictive eagerness of disappointment and jealousy, she resolved to ruin his hopes, although she deemed them too preposterous to succeed, even without her intervention. In prosecution of this design, she lost no opportunity of maligning Emily, stigmatizing her as a poor, moping, melancholy, mean-spirited, insipid girl, who would in all probability inherit the madness to which her father was unquestionably subject at times, and who had formed, as it was confidently whispered, an improper attachment to some low fellow, which was the real cause of that dejection of spirits under which she was continually labouring. Notwith-

standing this *penchant*, Mrs. Penguin represented her engagement to Lord Fawley as an indisputable fact, adding, that she had herself frequently heard old Welbeck declare she should marry none but a nobleman; and concluding with an expression of her amazement that any decent person should be tempted by the daughter's expected portion to connect himself with such a man as the father, whose suspected misdeeds might one day be brought to light, and plunge all his family into ignominy. For several weeks did she prosecute a daily attack of this nature, either by direct calumny or slanderous insinuation, not omitting in the meantime any of those seductive lures which might most effectually check his growing attachment for Emily, by engaging him in an intrigue at Grotto-house. Judging, however, of his mistress by his own honest heart, his confidence in her purity and truth were not to be shaken, and as these became confirmed in his mind, the more did he despise the motives, and the more effectually was his heart steeled against the blandishments of her unprincipled libeller.

These malicious accusations, therefore, did not constitute that severe trial of his trust to which we have alluded, and which sprang from the following circumstances. All those walks and wanderings with Mrs. Penguin, to which he had at first lent himself, from a belief in their perfect harmlessness, he had studiously avoided, as soon as a vague apprehension of her real object began to fill him with misgivings. An invitation, however, to walk over, with herself and Penguin, to an exhibition of archery on Boldre Heath, there was no reason to decline, and he accordingly accompanied them, chatting with the geologist upon his favourite topic, for the lady seldom took any notice of Henry in the presence of her husband. They had scarcely reached the entrance of the Forest, when she sent back Penguin to fetch some article of dress which she had purposely forgotten, and he was no sooner out of sight, than turning to Henry, she took his arm, and leading him hastily into a cross-path, exclaimed with an earnestness of manner that showed her to be under the influence of some vehement excitement, "Henry, my dear Henry! you shall now find that I am your best friend, that I have your interest at heart, that I would save you from being made the dupe of a sly, artful, designing, bad girl. I hate all these demure sanctified chits, that look as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, though they are no better than they should

be ; and if ever there was a crafty baggage of this sort, it is Emily Welbeck. Nay now, don't start and shake your head, but tell me what are your plans and intentions, if, indeed, you have ever given the matter a moment's serious reflection. Do you imagine that a stubborn, unfeeling, and yet ambitious old wretch like Welbeck, who has set his heart on making his daughter a peeress, will ever consent to her marrying an obscure, fortuneless person like you ? Not he ! he would see her lying dead at his feet first. Would you marry her without his consent ; and reduce her to beggary ; for in that case he would bequeath her nothing but his curse ?"

"God forbid !" ejaculated Henry.

"Cannot you then see that you are yielding yourself to a hopeless project ; that she herself must be perfectly aware of this ; that she knows your marriage to be impossible ; that she is only deluding and making a fool of you, if, indeed, she have not worse designs, which I forbear from mentioning ?"

"Emily Welbeck is no coquet ; she is incapable of heartless flirtation ; she would not trifle with the feelings of any man."

"If she is no coquet, she may still be a wanton ; if she cannot flirt, she is at all events not incapable of an intrigue. Well, well, I see by your reddening cheeks, and your kindling eyes that you are incredulous, that you are indignant, that you won't hear another word. Be it so ; I will say no more ; I don't want to abuse the little artful hussy, but to disabuse you. I presume you will believe the evidence of your own eyes, and that is the reason why I have brought you hither."

"If it be your vain hope to persuade me, that Emily Welbeck is a profligate and a wanton, you are throwing away both time and trouble. Nothing can ever make me credit so monstrous an assertion, and we may as well therefore return to the path that we have quitted."

"Hang me if you shall !" cried Mrs. Penguin, grasping his arm more firmly, and dragging him forward, while her countenance became inflamed with jealousy and passion. "You *shall* be made a spectator of her shame ! yes, by Heaven, you shall ! And if you then choose to continue her dupe, her gull, her cully, you must be the fondest fool in all Hampshire ! Forgive me, dear Henry, if I am vexed and angry at your infatuation, it is not on my own account, but entirely from my attachment—I mean my regard for your honour and happi-

ness. I told you that Emily Welbeck was in love with some low adventurer, who has been some time skulking about the Forest, and whose occupation cannot be an honest one, since he seems always afraid to show his face."

"You did advance this incredible charge, and I indignantly denied it then, as I do now. I would stake my life upon Emily's purity."

"Then you would lose it, foolish and credulous Henry! for by means of a servant recently discarded from the Manor-house, I have learned beyond all possibility of doubt, that she meets her lover every Thursday morning, and that yonder little open lawn, the very spot we are now approaching, is their place of assignation. This, too, is their hour of meeting. Here is a hollow, old oak, big enough to hold us both, and with fissures in the trunk that may enable us to command the lawn without being ourselves discovered. In! in! and if we do not soon see the whey-faced little Jezebel steal from the covert, and fly into the arms of her low lived paramour, I will never ask you to believe another word that I utter; and you may continue, if you like, to imagine the loose and designing Emily, to be an honest and respectable girl."

Thus taken by surprise, Henry found himself ensconced within the hollow tree, and Mrs. Penguin pressing close behind him, before he had time to reflect upon the motives with which she had conducted him thither, or the avowed object of his concealment. As these presented themselves to his mind, he had resolved, in the first instance, to humour the wishes of his companion, in order that, by proving the falsehood of the information which she had received from the discarded servant—for of its truth not even the shadow of a suspicion ever flitted athwart his mind—he might convince her of her groundless and ungenerous prejudice, and silence a system of calumny; not less revolting to himself, than injurious to its object. For a moment, he had felt bound to remain where he was, out of consideration for the fair fame of his mistress; but when he reflected upon what was due to himself, when he called to mind that he was acting the unworthy part of a spy, and of a spy, too, upon one whose character ought to place her far, far above the reach of suspicion, a self-reproaching blush at his own want of confidence reddened every feature, and he exclaimed, with a petulance into which he was very rarely betrayed. "Not a minute, not

a moment longer will I consent to act this ungenerous part ; let me pass, Madam, or I will force my way out."

"You shall kill me first !—not even force, while I have life remaining to prevent you, shall enable you to escape. I have brought you to this spot to save you, to convince you of your infatuation, and I swear by Heaven that you shall not stir a step till I have succeeded !"

Henry listened and gazed in utter astonishment, for she spoke with a fierce desperation, and the energy of passion with which her face was distorted, proved that she was not acting a part, that she firmly believed what she had asserted, and would never, unless by an exertion of superior force, be wrenched from the spot until the crisis she was expecting had arrived. For a short time he was irresolute how to act ; by her heaving bosom and agitated frame he saw that her feelings were in too high a state of excitement to suffer her to be influenced by arguments or commands, and he was about to sooth her, by gentle entreaties, that she would be composed, that she would resume the path they had quitted, and await the return of Penguin, when her restless eyes, which had been eagerly and incessantly peering through the clefts of the tree, suddenly flashed with malicious triumph, her features relaxed into a spiteful smile, and she burst into a low whispering laugh, at the conclusion of which she ejaculated, in a sudden voice, "There ! there ! will you believe me another time ? Will you credit your eyes ? Look ! look !"

Gazing in the direction of her distended and riveted eyes, Henry beheld a low chaise, drawn by a sorry horse, emerging from the alley of turf that opened into the little lawn. It was driven by a man muffled up in a shaggy great-coat, his hat slouched over his eyes, and a coloured handkerchief around his throat, who stopped the vehicle as soon as he came to the entrance of the lawn, and gazed searchingly upon the surrounding coverts, as if expecting to be joined by some one whom he had appointed to meet him.

"That is the low-lived lover !" exclaimed Mrs. Penguin, in an almost breathless whisper, "he is looking out for his sweetheart, for your phoenix, your paragon, your immaculate Miss Emily !"

"This is rather some poacher, or deer-stealer, who comes hither to meet his comrade," replied Henry ; "Emily Welbeck would not even speak to such a fellow as this. Come, let us steal away, for it may be dangerous to spoil his sport."

"But I *will* spoil his sport, and hers too, the wanton hussey! or I will die for it! Nay, you are my prisoner still, you shall not stir an inch. If you had a hundred daggers at my heart, I would not give way to you. "Hark! listen! listen!"

Again turning his eyes towards the stranger in the chaise, Henry saw him put a whistle to his mouth, and blow upon it gently; shortly after which he heard a rustling in one of the adjacent coverts, from which a female emerged, and ran hastily towards the vehicle. It was Emily Welbeck! he could not be mistaken; he recognised her face distinctly, and his surprise was quickly increased to such an unutterable amazement, as almost to make him distrust the evidence of his senses, when he saw the stranger, as she stepped into the vehicle, kiss and embrace her, and place her by his side, immediately after which he turned the chaise round, and drove along the turf into the recesses of the Forest with all the speed to which he could urge his horse.

Mrs. Penguin, overcome by the intensity of excitement to which she had been wrought by jealousy and hatred, leaned back against the tree, wearing, however, a look of malicious triumph, as she gaspingly exclaimed, "There! there! are you satisfied? have you seen enough?—I will release you now. My dear Henry!" she continued, after a pause, in which she had a little recovered herself, "I am sure you will forgive my vehemence, my rudeness. It sprung solely from my sincere regard for you. I was determined to save you from the snares of this demure-looking, but good-for-nothing, abominable girl. Thank God! I have succeeded. Come, we will go and look for Penguin." She leaned upon his arm, pressing it to her side with renewed exclamations of her joy at her having unmasked the profligate Emily, as they walked back towards the spot where she had parted from her husband. Henry, whose blood had been thrown into a sudden ferment, while his heart had sunk within him at the spectacle just presented to his eyes, walked on for some time in silence, bewildered and almost stupefied at the greatness of his first surprise, and at the crowd of conjectures and surmises that besieged his brain. As he recovered his faculties, however, he indignantly spurned from him the misgivings that had shot and thrilled through his bosom, under the influence of the electrical shock it had just received. In the uprightness of his own heart, he inava-

riably put the most charitable construction upon the actions of others; he would condemn no one unheard; in all cases he would cling to the belief of innocence, until guilt was incontestably established; and the gentle, bashful, pure-hearted, and high-minded Emily should never be torn from his affections while there was a possibility or hope of her innocence, to which he might cling. "All that I have witnessed," he said, rather thinking aloud, than addressing his companion, "startling, astounding, incomprehensible as it is, may yet be capable of explanation. I will question Emily; nothing but her own confession shall convince me of her guilt."

"My dear Henry! what explanation do you require? Is it not a manifest assignation? The timid, bashful Emily, steals without a companion from her father's house, and hides herself in the lonely depths of the forest. What object *could* she have but to intrigue with this low ruffian? Did you not see how the fellow kissed and hugged her! Pah! the forward slut! Confession, indeed! Do you imagine that the girl who has acted in this way would scruple at a lie to conceal her shame? There may be good reasons for her wanting a husband, but after what you have seen you will hardly be such a gull and gudgeon as to fall into the trap that she may set for you, however artfully she may bait it."

"I confess that I am staggered, overwhelmed by my utter inability even to guess at any plausible solution of what I have seen; but still I cling to my confidence in Emily, who is alike incapable of perpetrating a misdeed, or of attempting to support it by falsehood. Were she what you have represented her to be, all trust in female honour and purity would for ever be banished from my mind, and I could almost believe that angels themselves might sin. I will question her, I will question her."

"Do so, and if her confusion do not confirm her guilt, my name is not Laura Penguin! and if you are bamboozled by her flimsy pretences, your name, henceforward and for ever, should be Henry the Gull. See! I no sooner talk of addle-pates, than one of them turns up. Yonder comes Penguin. Let us say nothing to him of what has occurred, for he is such a chatterbox, that the story would be all over the village in half an hour, and bad as the hussy is, I don't want to expose her publicly, till you have yourself satisfied your mind as to her real character."

The husband joined them as she concluded, when Mrs. Penguin, who had merely invited Henry to see the archery at Boldre Heath, as a decoy to draw him to the place of assignation between Emily and the stranger, and who had not the least wish to proceed any farther, now that she had accomplished her object, pretended fatigue and indisposition, a plea which the sudden paleness left by her recent agitation served to confirm, and proposed that they should return. Henry gladly acquiesced, for he was in no mood for seeing sports and pastimes, nor did he speak, except in monosyllables, on their way back to Grotto-house.

Henry's state of mind during the remainder of this day, and the following sleepless night, we shall not attempt to portray. He felt that the happiness of his whole life was at stake ; for if he should have been deceived as to Emily, he foresaw that he should never again have confidence in human integrity ; that the remainder of his career would be a painful wading through the slough of despondency and hopelessness. At times, his bosom would swell with the conviction that she could explain every thing to his perfect satisfaction, and her own entire exculpation ; and then again fear would flutter about his heart, like a bird of ill omen, fanning it cold with its wings. True love is exquisitely sensitive, distrustful of its own merits, and therefore prone to jealous doubts and misgivings. Although he did not respect Mrs. Penguin, and was far from trusting all her assertions, much that she had said remained rankling in his memory. There might be reasons why Emily, considering that her father was occasionally half-deranged, and was vehemently suspected to have committed some undetected deed of darkness, might become his agent in secretly meeting and communicating with the instruments whom he had employed. Some such confidential mission might have been the cause of that mysterious assignation in the forest, of which he had been a recent spectator ; a theory, however, which was quickly dashed to the ground, when he recollected that, however imperatively she might be bound to meet a man of low stamp and station, there could be no reason why she should run to encounter him with manifest joy, why he should eagerly kiss and embrace her, and above all, why she should submit to his caresses, and suffer herself to be carried into the recesses of the forest without the smallest visible repugnance. This last was a damning fact, which baffled all

his ingenuity to explain, and the result of his futile and tormenting conjectures was such as might have been anticipated from his frank, straight-forward, and decided character. He determined to seize the first moment for demanding an explanation from Emily, to state candidly what he had so unintentionally discovered, and if she could account for it in a way satisfactory to her honour, and calculated to banish every misgiving from his mind, to confess his attachment, and make her an offer of his heart and hand. Should she be unable to clear up the mystery, and vindicate the perfect purity of her character, an alternative which he hardly thought possible, his mind was definitively made up as to the course he should pursue. He would not any longer compromise his feelings and his happiness by maintaining an intimacy that could conduce to no satisfactory result, and however painful might be the struggle, however desolate a separation under such circumstances might render his heart, he would bid her adieu, breathe a prayer for her happiness, and never again pass the threshold of the Manor-house.

Not less prompt in executing, than firm in making his resolves, he was on the point of setting out to carry his intentions into immediate execution, when Mrs. Penguin entered the room. All the storm of agitation by which her countenance had been darkened on the previous afternoon had now passed away; she had decorated her person to the best advantage, and wearing the most bewitching smile she could assume, she exclaimed, as she held out her hand, "My dear Henry! I am come to ask your pardon a second time for my foolish violence yesterday; but I was carried away by my feelings, which are always strong, sometimes ungovernable; but as you know my motives were good, I hope you have forgiven me. Are we once more friends?"

"We have never been otherwise," said Henry, taking the proffered hand, but not returning the gentle pressure with which it encountered his own: "I am grateful for the interest you take in my happiness; and, however painful may be the doubts you have awakened in my bosom, I am not the less indebted to you for giving me an opportunity of coming to an explicit understanding with Emily."

"You will find her out; sly as she is, you will find her out, and will thank me to your dying day for having opened your eyes. I feel that I have rendered you an important

service, and I have therefore the less hesitation in stating that I am come to ask a favour of you."

"The wife of my good and hospitable friend Penguin, will, I am sure, ask nothing of me that I shall not most readily grant," replied Henry.

"The case is this," resumed Mrs. Penguin, unfolding some papers which she had in her hand.—"I have an imprudent, I should rather say, an unfortunate relation, whom Penguin has repeatedly assisted by sums of money, which have been insufficient to extricate him from his embarrassments. He is again in trouble—in fact arrested, and will be locked up in prison to the utter ruin of his affairs, and the great distress of his family, unless some friend will join him in a bond for payment of the debt, which may safely be done; for in three weeks or a month, as he most solemnly assures me in this letter, his resources will become available, and enable him to discharge the debt without assistance from any one. I pledged myself to Penguin, when he made the last advance, not to trouble him again, at least, not for the present, with fresh applications, and as nothing should be held so sacred as a promise of this sort, I cannot violate it. Now, my dear Henry, if you will sign this bond, (it is a mere matter of form,) after my relation's attorney, who is below, has inserted your name in it, you will not only oblige me in a very particular manner, but serve a worthy man, whose difficulties are only of a temporary nature, and to whom you may therefore extend this favour without a shadow of risk."

"Is your relation quite confident of being enabled to discharge the amount, if a little time be granted him?"

"Oh! I will answer for his punctuality; there cannot be a doubt of it, and if by any possibility he should be disappointed, I must even apply to Penguin, who will, of course, come forward and pay it."

"Under such circumstances," said the confiding Henry, thus taken by surprise, "I shall be most happy to oblige you, and serve, at the same time, one whom you describe to be a worthy, though unfortunate man."

"The best creature breathing, and honest as the day. A thousand thanks, my dear Henry! you have made me your friend for ever, and you will oblige me still more by not mentioning the affair at present to Penguin. There is no necessity for this just now, though I will tell him all about it by-and-by."

Henry signed the bond, promised not to mention the transaction to any one, and having received a profusion of the warmest acknowledgments from Mrs. Penguin, set off on foot towards the Manor-house, revolving in his mind a hundred different modes of commencing the delicate explanations with Emily, satisfied with none that suggested themselves, but not the less firmly resolved to bring the affair to an immediate and conclusive issue.

CHAPTER VI.

Were I the fairest youth
That ever made eye swerve; had force and knowledge,
More than was ever man's, I would not prize them
Without her love.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

CUPID, in the meanwhile, had not been so exclusively occupied in promoting the mutual attachment of Emily and Henry within the walls of the forlorn, melancholy, old-fashioned Manor-house, as to neglect the extension of his empire in the gay and gorgeous saloons of Oakham-hall. Ringwood, availing himself of the opportunities afforded by his bringing flowers to Fanny, or shrubs and plants from his green-house, to assist in stocking the splendid new conservatory, in which the wealth of Mr. Frampton, and the taste of Lady Susan were so conspicuously displayed, had so ingratiated himself, as to receive much more frequent invitations than formerly. The owner of the stately Hall was not displeased to have as an occasional visitant and participator in his costly dinners, a poor, reduced squire, not solely as a pleasant companion, but because his scanty means and paltry establishment seemed, by the striking contrast they afforded, to invest his own mansion with a more lordly magnificence. Lady Susan, with the insulting condescension of pride in disguise, finding that Ringwood, who was a good botanist, might be made useful in decorating her conservatory, now affected to commiserate his reverses, and took prodigious credit to herself for giving the poor fellow the run of the Hall, which, she had no doubt, was an object to him in his

present circumstances. Augusta, whose keen observation quickly led her to suspect his predilection for Fanny, and who had a profound horror of her younger sister being married before her, hated him by anticipation ; losing no opportunity of ridiculing him on account of the mean, vulgar style in which he lived, and always contemptuously terming him "the Farmer," for the amiable purpose of vexing her sister, who retorted upon Augusta, and defended "the Squire," as she uniformly called him, with a warmth and petulance that betrayed the deep interest she felt in his cause. Ringwood himself, naturally frank and open-hearted, cordial and social in his temperament, and quite competent to maintain his own dignity and independence, against the smallest encroachments from any quarter, held himself upon a footing of perfect equality, mingling in the festivities of the Hall with his accustomed cheerfulness, and never troubling himself about the motives that led to his increased intimacy, since the result afforded him such a facility of access to Fanny.

In the first instance, he had been struck with the fascination of her playful and expressive countenance, which, even if it could not be strictly termed handsome, he much preferred to the regular, stately, haughty beauty of her sister, who seemed imperiously to challenge admiration as a right. In Fanny's artlessness, simplicity, fervour of honest feeling, and freedom from affectation, he found charms, rendered still more attractive, by a perpetual exhibition of their opposite qualities in Augusta. Both Mr. Frampton and Lady Susan being accustomed to treat Fanny as a child, not quite a simpleton, but an odd, strange, self-willed girl, of whom they should never be able to make any thing, little dreamed of any body falling in love with her ; and even had they contemplated such an occurrence, they could not for a moment have suspected that a daughter of theirs would fly in the face of her parents, by degrading herself to a union with a pauper, a character which she had always heard treated with peculiar contempt at Oakham-hall. Ringwood's attentions, therefore, to Fanny, pointed as they soon became, excited no other remark, than that it was very good-natured of him to take so much notice of her, coupled with an occasional expression of surprise at his finding any pleasure in her society. Thus favoured by circumstances, their mutual attachment was rapid in its progress, and congeniality of disposition equally tended to accelerate its growth. If the

Squire was frank, straight-forward, and sincere, almost to bluntness, Fanny had a correspondent honesty of expression, a *brusquerie*, as Lady Susan called it, which, removing her to the very antipodes of coquetry, rendered it difficult for her to suppress her thoughts, or modify her expressions, so as to accord with the hypocritical courtesies and refinements of polished society. She liked Ringwood, she respected his character, she cared not a doit about his comparative poverty, for she had seen enough of riches at home to convince her that they conferred no happiness; she felt honoured and elevated in her own opinion by the preference shown her; and although no avowal was yet called for, since no explicit declaration had been made, she took little pains to conceal the predilection she entertained, and being quite satisfied as to her choice, was predetermined to discard all affectation, and interpose no "coy denial," should Ringwood think proper to make her an offer of his hand.

That her parents might object to such a union she thought extremely probable; but as she detested all pride, whether of purse or pedigree, she was resolved, if no more valid objection could be urged against her suitor than his want of wealth, to consult her own happiness, rather than the projects of her ambitious parents, and accept him *sans ceremonie*. With all her childishness of appearance, and playfulness of manner, there was a bold independence of mind about Fanny, where she felt herself to be in the right, which her parents, who still considered her in her leading-strings, were not a little surprised to discover, and which they stigmatized, when it became developed, with the names of obstinacy, self-will, and wrong-headedness.

A circumstance which favoured the uninterrupted maturing of the attachment between Fanny and Ringwood, was the return, at this period, of Captain Frampton, accompanied by his friend Lord Mossdale, whom he had invited to the Hall for the ostensible purpose of affording him a few weeks' shooting in the Forest, but with the real design of inveigling him into a marriage with Augusta; an object in which all parties soon became too deeply absorbed, to trouble their heads about the growing intimacy between the Squire and the younger sister. His Lordship was young, rich, good-natured, and good-looking, without presenting any thing very patrician in his appearance, since he was unpretending, almost to carelessness, in his dress, and affecte

a rattling, easy sort of familiarity in his deportment towards high and low. When it is added that he was by no means deficient in understanding, and was nearly connected with an influential member of the administration, it is unnecessary to state that he had occasioned a prodigious competition among all the prudent and calculating mothers who had daughters to settle. No man had been so much invited, feasted, and flattered; no man had been exposed to so many dead sets at his heart; no man had contrived to extricate himself so uniformly and so adroitly from the toils that were set for him in all directions. This he had been enabled to accomplish, by penetrating, in the first instance, the secret motives of all the manœuvres and *finesses* that were directed against him. His established courage would not allow him to be bullied; his tact, as well as his awakened suspicions, prevented him from committing himself with any of the young ladies, by attempting to win their affections; and considering himself to be merely engaged in an amusing trial of skill, a game of attack and defence with the match-making mammas, he thought himself warranted in accepting their invitations, their professions of disinterested friendship, their feasts, and their flatteries, without the smallest present intention of accepting any one of their daughters.

He could not, therefore, but laugh in his sleeve, when he was so warmly pressed to visit Oakham-hall, knowing, as he did, Lady Susan's notorious resolves, to procure a titled husband for Miss Frampton, the Tuft-hunter, as she was sneeringly nick-named in some of the London circles; and he was still more amused when, upon his arrival at the house, he noticed the palpable and pointed manner in which her Ladyship attempted to decoy him into the snare. Augusta's beauty, accomplishments, and amiability, were the perpetual theme of maternal eulogy; Augusta, dressed up in the most alluring style possible, was thrown in his way, and placed beside him on all occasions; she played upon the harp, she sung, she danced for his amusement; Fanny was abased and disparaged, in order to elevate the favourite sister; and a perpetual round of festivity was maintained, that Oakham-hall might be rendered as attractive as possible to a visitant, who being at once rich and noble, united the suffrages of Mr. Frampton and Lady Susan. Although this succession of entertainments gave opportunities to Ringwood and Fanny for cultivating their mutual attachment, it failed in making

any amorous wishes in the bosom of his Lordship ; who, before he had been a fortnight in the house, became equally sick of the designing mother, and of the cold, formal, stately, though beautiful Augusta.

At the time of Lord Mossdale's arrival, Mr. Frampton, owing to his too free indulgence in turtle, punch, and claret, was visited with a severe fit of gout, which neither Mr. Tyson's infallible pill, nor the many bottles of wine which the bibulous apothecary drank at his patient's expense, had succeeded in dispelling. Always testy, Frampton's habitual peevishness was increased by his malady, although he did his best to conceal his ebullitions of temper from his visitant. To facilitate this object, Lady Susan suffered Pompey the black to be as much as possible in attendance upon him ; not only because his master found a pleasure in chatting with him about the West Indies, but because he wrapped up the gouty leg, or altered its position, with more patience and tenderness than any other, always excepting Fanny. Pompey, who from his utter ignorance of the profound homage expected from servants in England, was no great respecter of persons, was thus occupied one day, singing at the same time his favourite song about the overseer thrust into the copper of boiling sugar, when Lord Mossdale exclaimed as he left the room—"Positively, Mr. Frampton, you have a most extraordinary Esculapian to take charge of your gouty foot. The first fellow I ever heard of, since the days of Apollo, who sang songs and practised medicine at the same time. I like the creature's radiant smile and his white teeth, but I can neither admire his shrill voice, nor enter into the joke, which he himself seems to enjoy with so much glee, of murdering an innocent overseer."

"That is so like you, my dear Lord!" exclaimed Lady Susan ; "Wit and shrewdness, combined with humanity. Ay, the good heads and the good hearts always go together, I see. But what can you expect from such savages ? This Pompey is a perfect nuisance in the house, quite useless too ; does little or nothing but sing songs, and make popguns and playthings for the village children. I tolerate him on Mr. Frampton's account, for he really has a knack for managing a gouty foot, but I should be heartily glad if he were sent back again to the West Indies."

"The creature is not only insufferable from his disrespectful manner," said Miss Frampton, "but his being an odious

black serves to remind people that my father is a West India Proprietor, a circumstance which might as well be kept in the back-ground. Then the fellow wants height, and does not match any of the other footmen, and has no style in his appearance, so that our expensive liveries are quite thrown away upon him."

"'Pon my honour, that's uncawmonly true!" drawled the Captain, gently passing his fingers through his scented hair,—“the wretch doesn't look as if he belonged to a family of distinction. More like a great baboon dressed up, isn't he Mossdale? Quite rideeculous, 'pon my honour!”

“You know I always defend those whom every body else attacks,” cried Fanny; “and in behalf of my friend Pompey, I must observe, that you have overlooked two of his merits; which, in my opinion at least, would outweigh a thousand greater faults than you have enumerated. First, he once saved my father's life, and now waits upon him in his illness with the most assiduous attention; secondly, Pompey is a philosopher, for though he is banished, probably for ever, from his native country, though he is despised as a black among a nation of whites, and only fills a menial station, he is happier than any of those who look down upon him with pity or contempt.”

“The moment she opened her mouth I was quite sure Fanny was going to talk nonsense,” cried Lady Susan. “That black fellow a philosopher! What folly!”

“As to such a pennyless chap being a philosopher,” said Mr. Frampton, “that may be all stuff and rubbish; but there's a great deal of good sense in what the girl said about his saving my life, and managing my gouty foot. And I promise you one thing, Lady Susan, that neither your abuse of him, nor Augusta's, nor any body else's, shall prevail upon me to turn him out of the house, so you may as well all of you hold your tongues.”

“Does Miss Fanny venture to talk upon such an unfashionable subject as philosophy?” inquired Lord Mossdale, who saw that Frampton was out of humour, and good-naturedly sought to change the conversation.

“I am so far a philosopher, my Lord, that without understanding one syllable of the matter, I have endeavoured to jump to the great consummation at which all philosophy aims, since I am most stoically resolved to be as good a girl, and as happy a girl, as I can.”

"Singularly modest, upon my word!" cried Augusta; "and we are to have your own unimpeachable authority, I suppose, for your having succeeded in your aims."

"For the first, of my two objects, I must appeal to the superior powers. Please, Lady Susan!" exclaimed Fanny, going up to her mother and curtsying with a mock solemnity; "please give me a character, and certify that I am a good girl."

"Begone, you silly madcap! I cannot afford you any such voucher, for you are constantly refusing to take the advice which I and Augusta give you."

"Are you quite, quite sure," said Fanny, with an arch smile, "that this may not proceed from my firm resolution to be always good and happy?"

"Lady Susan refuses her testimonials," said the Captain; "so you can't prove your case; you can't now passively, 'pon my honour!"

"But Fanny will not acknowledge herself to be in the wrong, she never does," said Miss Frampton.

"Not now, Augusta, at all events; for as my character as a philosopher is at stake, I will maintain my point, and reduce you all to a dilemma. I said that I was happy, and as no one can judge of this but myself, so no one can contradict me."

"Oh! that we can admit, for thoughtless girls are always happy; but the question at issue refers to your goodness. How do you establish this point?"

"By the simple fact that I am happy; for as the human heart and conscience are constituted,—at least, I can answer for my own—I know that it is impossible to be perfectly happy without being good."

"Faith! there is real philosophy in that observation, as well as sound morality, ay, and pure religion too," said Lord Mossdale.

"Oh, my Lord; I talk so much nonsense in a general way," cried Fanny, "that I am obliged to blurt out something rational now and then, or I should be set down for a confirmed simpleton. Now that I have begun so luckily, I am determined to be profound and philosophical for the rest of the morning, and therefore—Gemini! there's Snowball upon the lawn! My Lord, my Lord! do look at her. Did you ever see such a beautiful greyhound? She was given to me by Squire Ringwood. Oh, you frolicsome darling! I must

positively have a game of romps with you."—And so saying she scampered down-stairs, and was presently seen bounding like a young wood-nymph after Snowball, until both disappeared in the adjoining shrubbery.

"That is just poor Fanny's odd, inconsistent way," observed Lady Susan: "making some rational observation that nobody expects from her, and then suddenly talking and acting like a silly rooming school-girl. Well, might Sir Nugent Clavering term her the inspired idiot."

"Inspired she may be, but I'll swear she is far enough from an idiot," exclaimed Lord Mossdale.

"It is a little like one too," said Miss Frampton, "to run out without her bonnet such a damp day as this, which is sure to take every bit of curl out of her hair; and even if the grass is not wet, she will inevitably stretch her shoes, by running so fast in them; they will never again sit becomingly upon her foot, for they are French shoes." The eyes of the speaker fell as if unconsciously upon her own remarkably small well-appointed foot, as it hung by premeditated accident over the edge of an ottoman; Lord Mossdale's eyes naturally took the same direction, and there was a momentary silence, for both Lady Susan and her daughter were careful not to interrupt him in so interesting a study.

"Augusta, my dear!" at length exclaimed the mother; "be so good as to step up-stairs and look for my vinaigrette, which I have somewhere mislaid." As the daughter won her way mincingly towards the door, bridling up her figure, and throwing back her head, the mother continued, "Really Augusta quite spoils one for backs, hers is such a very fine one, and the slope of her shoulders is so perfect. I may say this without any suspicion of partiality, for when she was presented at Court, the King himself, who is an admirable judge of such matters, made the same observation to my relation the Marchioness."

"Miss Frampton is in every respect extremely beautiful," said his Lordship.

"Oh! mere beauty is nothing, there are plenty of handsome girls about town; but Augusta's distinguishing merit is the style of her face and appearance altogether, which is quite patrician, stamping her at once of the Corinthian order. She was evidently designed by nature to be a nobleman's wife."

"I wonder, then, that she never became one," said Lord

Mossdale, with a smile of malicious pleasantry upon his features, as he recollected her nick-name of the Tuft-hunter.

"She has had numerous opportunities, but Augusta is so very particular, so conscientious, I may say. She will never marry where she cannot bestow her heart; but whenever she fixes her affections, she will make a most exemplary wife." Her ladyship was good enough to add, that after all, neither her daughter nor herself were fastidious in their choice, and then proceeded to paint the *beau ideal* of what they would both consider an eligible husband, drawing such a close likeness of his Lordship, that he instantly recognised his own portrait, and suddenly broke off the colloquy, lest he should be taken by storm, and forced into an offer of his hand, before he could quit the window in which they were conversing.

The return of the Black servant into the room with the crutches, which he had been altering for his master, afforded Lord Mossdale a seasonable pretext for changing the conversation. "Pompey, my good fellow," he said, "we have been talking about the song you were singing just now. Does it relate to a real occurrence?"

"Iss, gemman, iss; ebery word all trute."

"How do you know; did you witness it yourself?"

"Iss, gemman, iss; Pompey tell oo all 'bout it."

"Say my Lord, sirrah! and not gemman," cried Lady Susan.

"Bery well, my Lady. Oo lookee here, my Lord, and no gemman—oo listen a me. One day, da harwess time come on—smack, smack! go do whip, afore da sun poke him red nose out da sea—da bell ring—da conch blow—up jump Niggers, and bery glad too, 'cause harwess time, and no dam watchman hinder dem eat da sugree-canes. Bery well; ebery man take sharp bill, cut down cane, make dem into junks, tie dem into bundle, toss dem in broad-wheel wagon; off go da mules, gee up! ge wo! crack! crack! crack! go da mills; bubble! bubble! go da coppers, and out come da flames from da boiling-house chimney. Gog! hot enough arout dat. Nebber mind da hot wedder. Da Niggers work, and laugh, and sing, and cut cane, and eat bit when nobody look, and load more wagon, when all sudden—bootiful wedder just now—lily black cloud come up out da sea, wind blow and whistle bery bad, canes swing-swang back'ard and forr'ard, and cocoa-nuts on da shore rattle and knock der heads togedder. What for? can oo tell dat, my Lord, and no gemman?"

"I suppose because a hurricane was springing up."

"O you clebberfella! somebody tell oo. Iss, bad hurricane begin; so da mill stop to take off da canvass, an' da rope break, and he no come off; so da driber, what oo call da oberseer, order great Cormantee Nigger, called Papaw, climb to end of da mill-wing, to take off da canvass. But da wind blow poor fellah from da mill, and hé fall to da ground, bery mush bruise; and da bad mahn oberseer come up in great passion and floggee poor Papaw, when he no able to crawl away. Gog! who ebber tink of sush a thing? So Papaw wait till he strong, and den watch da oberseer when he go up da ladder, look at da boiling copper, and den come behind him ' and push him into da copper, smack!—Buckara, buckara, cracko!' so dere he got a hickory-nut to crack: an' so dat's da whole story, my Lord, and no gemman."

"And considering the provocation poor Papaw received," said Lord Mossdale, "I should be inclined to call this offence a justifiable homicide."

"Come, Mossdale!" cried the captain, "if you talk to Pompey about the West Indies, he'll tell you stories all day long. The fellow's a monstrous bore, quite abawminable, 'pon my honour! The gamekeeper's waiting, shall we take our guns, and look after some phaisants?"

"With all my heart," said his Lordship, and making his bow to the ladies, he quitted the room, and sallied forth towards a distant preserve, accompanied by the Captain. "A devilish odd girl, that syster Fanny of yours," said the Peer, as soon as they had quitted the house; "and hang me, if I dont think she's a much cleverer little baggage than any of you seem to imagine. Playful as a kitten, cares for nobody, says whatever comes uppermost, and yet somehow or other I like her all the better for it. To me, her giddy nonchalance is a treat, quite *piquant*, after the artificial, cold, and yet designing demureness of half the girls one sees about town. I dare say she is an exceedingly good-hearted and good-tempered little creature."

"'Pon my honour, Mossdale, I dont know what to say to that. You should have heard her rate me when I first returned, about that rideeculous affair of Lucy Haselgrove, I thought the little vixen would have pawsitively torn my eyes out. Never heard any thing so prepaawsterous, 'pon my honour!"—The Captain proceeded to state, that the rumours which were circulating upon this subject had occasioned him

a good deal of annoyance ; that he had been lectured both by Mr. Frampton and Lady Susan ; and that, as he attributed the publicity of the affair to the impertinent interference and ungentlemanlike comments of one Henry Melcomb, a young Yankee, who had recently come to the neighbourhood, he should take an early opportunity of calling him to account for meddling in matters that did not belong to him. Lord Mossdale, who had no higher morality than generally falls to the lot of young men of fashion, ridiculed the idea of his friend's being annoyed at any gossiping that might be occasioned by such a trumpety affair ; but his Lordship had a foolish prejudice against the Americans in general, and as he really felt indignant that a youthful Yankee should presume to condemn the recreations of an English gentleman, he urged the Captain to enjoin his future silence, or to threaten the babbling fellow with the infliction of the horsewhip. His companion, whose previous ill-will towards Henry was aggravated by these irritating comments, expressed his determination not to pass over the injurious epithets, which had been coupled with his name, but to demand a public apology from the offender, or a retraction of his assertions.

Thus conversing, they proceeded towards the preserve, which they had nearly reached, when the Captain exclaimed, "Uncawmonly odd, quite rideeculous, 'pon my honour ! Here comes the very fellow ! the saucy Yankee that we were talking of. This is parteecularly lucky,—save me the trouble of calling upon him, which is a thing I abawminate. Now you shall see, my dear Mossdale, how I will make the young backbiting rascal eat his own words.—Mr. Melcomb, I believe."

"That is my name," said Henry, who was bending his way to the Manor-house when he encountered the sportsmen.

"I understand, Sir," continued the Captain, forgetting his affected drawl in the excitement of his feelings, "that, not content with interfering in the affair of Lucy Haselgrove, the motives for which I can pretty well understand, you have presumed to tattle about my conduct in the business, and have taken very unwarrantable liberties with my name."

"I am no tattler," replied Henry, calmly ; "nor have I said a word more upon the subject than I thought necessary for the vindication of Lucy's character. If I am talking to

Captain Frampton, I beg to assure you, that I have taken no liberties with your name that were unwarrantable, since I have not uttered a syllable concerning you that was not strictly true."

"And pray, Sir, may I ask the exact import of the truths that you have thought proper to couple with my name."

"I cannot recollect the precise phrases I may have used, but their substance amounts to this—that the decoyer of Lucy from her home, under the pretext of marriage, but with the real object of seducing her, was an unprincipled liar."

"Damnation, Sir! have you the insolence to apply these terms to me, and before my face, too?"

"As I confess that I have applied them to you behind your back, I think it but right to repeat them before your face."

"Very well, Sir, very well. I presume you will give me satisfaction for this insulting language."

"I really know not what satisfaction I can afford you, farther than by assuring you, that I would not have employed such terms, unless I conscientiously believed every word to be true. I would not wantonly offend any man, however he may merit my contempt; but there is no man whom I would not rather offend than violate truth."

"Enough, Sir, quite enough; you shall hear from me."

"I had much rather not, for there can be little pleasure in communicating with a person of your character, and as I find still less in your conversation, you must allow me to wish you a good morning." So saying, Henry made a slight inclination of his head, walked slowly away, and taking a book from his pocket, began to read it as he proceeded.

"Curse me, if this Yankee is not the most consummately impudent young dog I ever encountered!" exclaimed Lord Mossdale. "Cool as a cucumber, too, the whole time. Who is he? What is he? Is the fellow fightable?"

"I understand him to be related in some way, though I don't know how, to the late Captain Tenby, of the navy."

"Who, to my knowledge, was a gentleman, and a man of good family. Then this young chap is decidedly shootable, and you must call him out."

"That I shall do instantly, be he who he may," cried the

Captain, piqued and incensed to the very last degree, not only by the pointed insult he had received in the presence of his friend, but by the cool and aggravating audacity with which Henry had comported himself. He was infinitely too much irritated to pursue his intended sport; instead, therefore, of proceeding to shoot pheasants, he returned immediately to Oakham-hall to concert measures for shooting Henry Melcomb.

CHAPTER VII.

Such duty as the subject owes a prince,
 Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
 And when she's froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
 And not obedient to his honest will,
 What is she but a foul contending rebel,
 And graceless traitor to her loving lord?

Taming of the Shrew.

PEOPLE are generally irritated at any disparaging terms that may be applied to them in exact proportion to their truth, a circumstance which will explain the rage of Captain Frampton, notwithstanding the general indolence and apathy of his character. On his arrival at Oakham-hall, he sat down, and wrote a challenge in due form, of which Lord Mossdale, who was scarcely less incensed than his friend at the cool impudence, as he termed it, of the Yankee, volunteered to be the bearer, in order that he might personally assist in making such preliminary arrangements as might be required. Henry, not having found Miss Welbeck at home, had returned to Grotto-house, when his Lordship having requested a private interview, placed the letter in his hand, with no other previous observation than that it came from Captain Frampton. Henry, after having perused it, inquired whether his Lordship would have the goodness to take back the answer, which he would write immediately in his own room; observing, that if he were a geologist, he would not lack amusement for a few minutes, as there were abundant specimens of minerals and fossils dispersed about the parlour. His Lordship bowed coldly, for although the manner in which he had been addressed was perfectly courteous, he thought it rather cavalier treatment that a man of his station

should be left kicking his heels in a strange house, and be requested by a Yankee to become his letter-carrier. Henry, however, who, though he meant not to give the least unnecessary offence, respected nothing but moral rank, and honoured no distinctions so much as those of virtue, left him without farther apology to his meditations or his geological studies, and, proceeding to his own room, wrote an answer to the Captain's epistle, which he put into his Lordship's hand.

"I presume," said the Peer, as he took the letter, "that you refuse to retract or to apologize for the injurious terms you have applied to my friend."

"If by the word injurious you mean calumnious or untrue, I deny that I have employed any such terms. It is of his conduct that he ought to be ashamed, not of the merited censure that I applied to it. I have said nothing that was not strictly true; and for the truth, a brave man will never apologize, while a conscientious one will never retract it."

"I did not come here, Sir, to chop logic. I understand nothing of that sort of proceeding."

"I can very easily believe it, my Lord."

"Then, Sir, am I to take it for granted that you have in this letter entered into such full explanations of time and place, as will preclude the necessity of any farther preliminary meeting?"

"I have been so very explicit," replied Henry, "that your Lordship cannot possibly have occasion to revisit Grotto-house, or seek any fresh interviews with me."

"It is well, Sir, it is well: I admire your spirit; I like these affairs to be settled at once; to be conducted in a prompt and business-like manner, for fear of accidents. I wish you a good morning."

"It is no longer morning, my Lord; I wish you a good afternoon."

"What a pragmatical quiz it is!" muttered Lord Mossdale to himself, as he quitted the house; "Really the Yankee's as precise and cool as if he were giving a lesson in grammar, instead of making arrangements for a duel. I am glad, however, that he has come to book so readily, and means to go out like a man. We shall see how he stands fire. I have known many a fellow, as bold as a lion beforehand, who cried peccavi when it came to measuring the ground, and handling the Mantons; and I shall not there-

fore be surprised if this crowing cock prove a dunghill at last; we may see him yet eat his own words, and make an apology. Faith! it will be his wisest course, for Framp-ton's a good shot; and though it is difficult to pique him, owing to his confounded indolence, he doesn't like trifling when once he comes to the scratch."

Like most well-pampered men who have jaded their senses by over-indulgence, Lord Mossdale was liable to fits of listlessness and satiety, which made excitement of any sort a pleasurable sensation. This desiderated stimulus was furnished by the prospect of a duel, in which, if he had been a principal instead of a second, he would still have found a source of gratification. He entered, therefore, with ardour into the arrangements of the expected meeting, the whole of which he had planned in his own mind on his way back to Oakham-hall. "The Yankee shows fight," said his Lordship, putting Henry's letter into his friend's hand; "he will neither retract nor apologize, so you must get your Mortimers or Mantons. If you're unprovided, I can lend you mine. I never travel without them, for there's no saying what may happen. Can't you make out his pothooks and hangers? What a confounded long time you are spelling his epistle!"

"Oh! the fellow writes as laigibly as a lawyer's clerk; but it's a long-winded concern. Can't exactly say whether it's an essay or a sermon; but it reads uncawmonly like a printed book. Not quite intailligible, but I rather suspect the cowardly rascal shows the white feather, and declines the honour of standing fire. Altogether the most redeeculous thing I ever met in the whole course of my life. Do read it for me, for I can't altogether understand it; can't now, 'pon my honour!"

"If two heads are better than one," said Lord Mossdale, "four ears must be better than two, so listen!" and, taking the letter, he read as follows:

"SIR,

"I have received your very silly letter, the style of which is quite worthy of the matter, inasmuch, as it contains two errors of grammatical construction, and one fault of orthography, or, at least, a Latinism, by the omission of the letter *u* in the word honour, a practice unsanctioned by any standard writer. For having applied words to you, of which

you do not, and cannot, deny the truth, you send me a challenge, which I have not the smallest hesitation in declaring that I dare not accept, because I dare not violate the laws of God and man.

“ ‘ Duelling is a relic of barbarism, which fools, bullies, and blackguards, seek to maintain, because it affords them, as they ridiculously imagine, an easy method of proving that they are gentlemen ; but it is a practice to which men of sense, virtue, and religion, who alone are the real gentlemen, will resolutely oppose themselves ; not because they are deficient in personal courage, the most common of all qualities—but because they possess that higher moral intrepidity, which enables them to despise and defy public opinion, when its voice cannot be obeyed without the commission of a wanton and flagrant crime.

“ ‘ But even were I not deterred from accepting your challenge by paramount considerations of duty, I should still decline it, from the glaring futility and inconsequence of the proceeding. If you were to shoot me, you would not the less be what I have termed you, though you would be a murderer in addition. Were I to shoot you, it would bring an indelible stain upon my own name, without in any degree clearing yours. If neither of us shoot the other, we shall both of us be just where we are now, so that we had much better spare ourselves all the trouble and annoyance of going out.

“ ‘ You see, therefore, that there is not any possible alternative, in which my fighting you could conduce to a rational or satisfactory result, even were I released from those divine and human ordinances, which prohibit me from seeking the life of a fellow-creature, or wantonly throwing away my own. This determination being grounded upon immutable principles, cannot, under any circumstances, be either retracted or modified. It is the inflexible resolve of

“ ‘ HENRY MELCOMB.

“ ‘ Grotto-house, Wednesday afternoon.’ ”

As soon as Lord Mossdale had recovered from the fit of laughter into which he burst as he concluded reading the letter, he exclaimed, “ Curse me if ever I was so bit before ! fairly taken in,—a dead hoax, I confess, for I never doubted that the Yankee meant to turn out. However, since his only mode of fighting is to fight shy, you must post him as a

coward and a blackguard, cane him the first time you meet him, and so dismiss the young grammarian to chop logic at his leisure."

"This determination is the inflexible resolve of—Arthur Frampton," said the Captain, parodying the conclusion of Henry's letter, as he held it up contemptuously with his finger and thumb. "But what does the Jackanapes mean by my two errors of construction? Pawsitively it's a monsous lie!"

"Nay, it's likely enough to be true; and in return for your two mistakes, he has offered you two proofs that he is himself a good grammarian, for he has lately taught Lucy Haselgrove and young Nettle-top to conjugate; and we see by this letter that he knows perfectly well how to decline the word—duel."

"He he!—vairy good!—capital! excellent! You're in high force this morning; uncawmonly droll—conjugate—decline—quite redeeculous, 'pon my honour!"

"I hope you mean your honour with the letter u, for otherwise it is no oath, but a Latinism."

"I shall take it as a parteecular favour, Mossdale, if you won't make me laugh, for I've cracked my lip, and it hurts me uncawmonly, 'pon my honour! besides, it looks so mon-sous vulgar."

"Never mind; you must open your mouth wider in half an hour, for dinner will be ready by that time. Come, shall we go and dress? There is no time to lose." The friends withdrew to their toilette, and when in the evening they were left alone with their wine, the letter was again produced and reperused, to the accompaniment of many a fresh sneer and much contemptuous bantering.

Henry, in the meanwhile, who was remarkable for his general equanimity and self-possession, whose happiness, indeed, the result of good health and a good conscience, had hitherto suffered little or no interruption was in a more painful state of mind than he thought he could have ever experienced, without having incurred it by any misconduct of his own. The day when he received the challenge was destined to be an eventful one; his principles were to be assailed from quarters diametrically opposed to each other; his sense of duty was to be put to the test by love as well as by injured pride and hatred: he had firmly resisted the temptation to sin, by declining the challenge of a man; he had now to conquer a

far more trying temptation, in withstanding the seductions of a handsome, alluring, and enamoured woman. Judging of others by herself, Mrs. Penguin had never entertained a moment's doubt that Emily Welbeck's assignation in the forest was a meeting with some low lover for criminal purposes; and she had not, therefore, attempted to dissuade Henry from visiting the Manor-house, in the malicious hope that all intercourse would be broken off by his discovering Emily's inability to exculpate herself. From her observation of his character, however, she began subsequently to think that he might be easily hoodwinked and deluded by the solemn protestations of innocence, and lofty sentiments of virtue, which she believed Emily to be quite capable of feigning for the purpose of concealing her misconduct, and averting his suspicions. The imposition she had herself practised upon Penguin, by hiding from him her own early lapse from virtue, and persuading him that she had never been attached to any one but himself, impressed her with the notion that Henry might be similarly gulled, and made her regret that she had not more earnestly dissuaded him from seeking the interview, and demanding the explanations that he had pledged himself to require. These fears and misgivings had haunted her during the whole time of his visit to the Manor-house, the object of which he had stated to her with his usual frankness. She had been sitting for some time upon the tenter-hooks of expectation, awaiting his return, and was proportionably mortified when, upon his arrival at the house, he was engaged immediately, and for some time, with Lord Mossdale.

No sooner was he left alone, than Mrs. Penguin, who had purposely sent her husband out of the way, hurried into the parlour where he was sitting. She had attired herself in the most alluring manner possible, making such a display of her charms, as she flattered herself would prove utterly irresistible, especially when she recollected the youth of her intended victim. It was not without considerable agitation that she inquired the result of the meeting with Emily, but becoming instantly more composed, when she found that no interview had taken place, she began, in the most urgent terms that she could command, to persuade him to rest satisfied with the incontrovertible evidence of his own eyes, and never more to think of a girl who could carry on an intrigue with a low ruffian, and yet hypocritically affect all the demureness of modesty. Unpersuaded by her arguments, and unbent by

her earnest entreaties, Henry reiterated his intention of demanding an early explanation, and expressed a renewed conviction that Emily would be able to exculpate herself. At this fresh proof of his credulous gullibility, for such it appeared to her, Mrs. Penguin saw clearly that she would soon have an established and most formidable rival at the Manor-house, unless she could immediately divert Henry's thoughts and affections into another channel, and entangle him in her own snares. The hints of her attachment, which she had repeatedly thrown out, had not been taken; her lures had hitherto failed to inveigle him; he was either blind or timid, and it was absolutely necessary to apprise him of his good fortune by advances too unequivocal to be mistaken. This was the only feasible method of detaching him from Emily, and the present appeared to her to be the proper moment for carrying it into execution. Abandoning herself, therefore, to her guilty passion, the unprincipled woman made a full, unblushing avowal of her attachment, a confession to which, she said, she was impelled by the ungovernable vehemence of her love, expressing a confident hope that he would not now hesitate in his choice, between a pale-faced, artful girl, carrying on a love affair with an unknown vagabond, and one who, whatever might be her personal allurements—and she trusted they were rather more attractive than those of Miss Welbeck—could at all events offer him the sole and undivided affections of her whole heart.

Transfixed with sorrow and surprise at a declaration so plain and profligate, Henry could not help hearing it to a conclusion; but he had no sooner recovered from his amazement, than he shook off the seductive creature, who had taken possession of his hand, and starting aside, as if he had seen a basilisk in his path, exclaimed with a tone and look of poignant mental anguish, rather than of anger, "Unhappy woman! what have you said, what have you done? Would to heaven that you had never uttered these guilty sentiments! Would to heaven that I had never heard them! Oh, my dear, dear Mrs. Penguin!—but only dear to me so long as you are the chaste and virtuous wife of my friend—what infatuation has blinded you, what demon has been goading you on to the brink of a precipice, whence, by one single false step, you may be irredeemably plunged into guilt, misery, and wretchedness, both here and hereafter? By all that you value upon earth, by all your hopes of heaven, I implore, I

entreat, I supplicate you to cast out the devil that possesses you, to be again yourself, to recover the purity of your mind, to discard for ever the licentious and abominable thoughts which—nay! you shall not speak, you shall not commit yourself any farther, I have heard too much already—you must, you shall now listen to me! Gracious God! have you considered what it is to be an adulteress, that it adds perjury to all its other enormities? Did you not solemnly vow at the altar to be faithful to your husband, and can the Deity be insulted, can all human law be outraged, without entailing ultimate misery and destruction upon so deep and daring a transgressor? Impossible! If adultery were not inevitably pursued by the gnawings of remorse from within, and the hootings of contempt from without, there would be no security left upon earth for happiness, virtue, or religion. And me too! Have you considered the base treachery, the black ingratitude of which I should be guilty, were I to sting the heart, and poison for ever the happiness of the benefactor who is so generously affording me the enjoyment of his hospitality, and the protection of his roof? I shudder at the very thought. Oh, no, no, no, you have not, you cannot have considered any of these things. You are labouring under a momentary delusion, an alienation of mind which will quickly pass away, and against the return of which you must earnestly and devoutly supplicate heaven in your prayers. But it is safer to avoid temptation, than to trust to the resolutions of human infirmity. You are handsome, very handsome; I am subject to all the frailties of youth; an unguarded moment, in spite of all our good intentions, might plunge us both into guilt and all its train of miseries. I dare not expose myself to such a perilous trial, and I shall therefore quit your house to-night.”

During this speech, Mrs. Penguin's countenance, agitated by contending emotions, had gradually become inflamed and reddened, not by the suffusions of penitence and shame, but by the angry paroxysms of a violent and vicious mind. Her eyes flashed, her bosom heaved, her veins swelled and darkened, her nostrils were dilated, and though, in order to restrain her ebullient feelings, she bit her lip till the marks of her teeth remained deeply indented upon it, she could hardly prevent her rage and disappointment from bursting out in a torrent of passionate invective. Henry, however, perceiving the struggle of her emotions, and determined not to be interrupted

in his painful, though necessary remonstrance, had overawed her by the calm but superior energies of virtue, and had thus compelled her to hear him out. The earnestness, the inflexible decision of his looks and tones, as well as the dignified tenor of his sentiments, all convincing her that he would be immovable, that she had thrown away her blandishments, that she had nothing whatever to hope, in one moment her whole bad heart became drenched in bitterness, and her licentious passion, let it not be dignified with the noble name of love, was converted into a deadly hatred.

The desire of revenge, however, which instantly sprung up in her bosom, prompted her to assume a forced composure, though she still spoke pantingly, and in an unnatural voice, as she exclaimed, "You are right, Sir, quite right, perfectly right. These are not my real sentiments—nothing but a temporary—in short, a mere frolic, nothing more, just to try you. But, at all events, Sir, I hope you are at least man enough not to disclose what has passed between us."

"I promise you never to divulge it to any breathing being."

"Will you swear to keep it secret?"

"I never swear, but I have said it, and I am not in the habit of swerving from my word, least of all should I do so in so delicate an affair as this."

"Enough, Sir, enough: that is all I have now to require of you," said Mrs. Penguin, tossing out of the room, violently shutting the door after her, and muttering between her clenched teeth as she retired, "Poor, canting, puritanical milksop! does the mean, paltry, chicken-hearted fellow think that I want to hear a sermon from him? Let him look to it! let him look to it! I'll not be thus insulted for nothing. I'll have my revenge, or my name is not Laura Penguin!"

Henry had said that he would immediately quit Grotto-house, but a moment's consideration showed him that so sudden a departure would demand explanations, both with Mrs. Tenby and Penguin, which must be managed with great delicacy, lest they should excite suspicions, which on all accounts he was most anxious not to awaken. In this dilemma he remained for some time, taking counsel of his own thoughts as to his most prudent course of action. The more he reflected on the predicament in which he was placed, the more urgently did he feel the necessity of withdrawing himself from the fascinations with which he might

be assailed ; while his solicitude upon Mrs. Penguin's account, his earnest wish to preserve her name from imputation, and to confirm her in the good resolutions which he flattered himself he had excited in her bosom, were still more intense than the considerations which had reference to his own honour and safety. Nothing could induce him to assign a false motive for his abrupt departure, for he utterly abhorred a lie ; but he might truly state that a difference had unexpectedly arisen between Mrs. Penguin and himself, and that his feelings of independence would not allow him to remain beneath a roof where there was reason to believe that he was no longer considered a welcome guest. These appeared to be the most feasible motives he could assign, and having proceeded to Mrs. Tenby's apartment, he lost no time in stating them, avowing his intention of immediately quitting the house, and taking up his abode for the present at the George-inn, at Thaxted ; but adding, that he saw no reason why she should accompany him, if she preferred remaining in her present quarters.

" Rattlesnakes and ringums !" exclaimed Mrs. Tenby, in utter amazement ; " you can't be serious ; you're only poking fun at me. What ! throw yourself out of peck and perch, where you may be saving nine dollars out of every ten that come in, because you and she have had a few words ! Well, this beats all natur ! I wouldn't budge from free quarters like these ; no, not if she had poked out one of my eyes in a gouging match ; if I would, I'm up the tree, that's all ! "

" Your conduct, Madam, need not be influenced by mine, though I would caution you against wearing out your welcome : but the motives by which I am governed are imperative. I am quite serious, my resolution is formed, I shall quit the house to-night. "

" Why then, I reckon, you're the biggest gump a-going ! A pretty considerable handsome fool you'll be making of yourself if you do. Henry, Henry ! now don't be so tejus ! Here's a fuss and a coil about a few loud words from a woman's tongue ! Lord ! boy, you mustn't be so nice, but give a scratch for a claw, or you'll never scramble through the world. ' Handle your tools without mittens, ' as poor Richard says, and remember ' that the cat in gloves catches no mice. ' "

" My reasons for going are conclusive to my own mind.

Every thing may be lost, while nothing can be gained by my remaining beneath this roof."

"Hear to him! hear to him! 'Tatoes and codfish! I haven't patience to listen to you. Nothing to be gained! How do you know that? Now, I rather reckon, that much may be gained; for if Penguin were to break his neck over one of the cliffs he's always grubbing at, and that's pretty likely, I guess, oughtn't his own brother's widow to look for pickings, and mayn't you come in for handsome snacks? He has got no children, and never will have, tell me on't if he does! Why shouldn't he adopt you, and leave you a slice of fortun? Didn't Tenby do so? Guess he did, indeed! Henry, Henry! don't you be so 'tarnal huffey as to quarrel with your bread-and-butter; but hold a candle to the devil, ask her pardon, and make it up with her; she's neither a Mohawk nor a Nigger; one word may settle it all, and remember, that 'for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy,' as poor Richard says."

"Your advice comes too late; our disagreement is of a nature that cannot be reconciled, consistently with what I feel to be due both to Mrs. Penguin and myself."

"Joes to coppers I'll make it all up in five minutes. Harkee, boy, I haven't got eyes for nothing, though you may; she likes you a pretty clever bit more than she does her husband, in spite of all her palavering and bamboozledums. Ay, it's as true as ever I was born in Virginny. You have only to beckon with your finger, I reckon, and she'll come to you in any way you like, either as soople as a snake, or as spry as a cat: so once more I say, don't be afraid to stoop when there's no other way of reaching your dish. 'When the well's dry, you'll know the worth of water.' Remember 'that poor pride soon gets a fill, for it's hard for an empty bag to stand upright;' and above all, recollect, that 'if you will not hear reason, she will surely rap your knuckles,' as poor Richard says."

Henry was about to renew the expression of his regret that he could not comply with her wishes, his resolution to depart being inflexible, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Penguin burst into the room, trembling and pale with agitation, and for a few seconds utterly unable to speak from the vehemence of his emotions. "Soh, Sir!" he at

length exclaimed, bending his angry eyes upon Henry, and holding up his clenched fist, though he still kept at a respectful distance,—“a pretty viper, I find, I have been nourishing in my bosom! Oh, you young miscreant! you audacious profligate! you scandalous hypocrite! Is this your gratitude for all the kindness I have shown you, to creep into my house, like a false-hearted, deceitful thief, that you might rob me of my most precious treasure? 'Gad, sirrah! if I were twenty years younger, and a fighting man—which, thank God! I never was—I would break every bone in your skin, and then kick you down stairs. As it is, I shall not demean myself to a scuffle with you; but out of this house you shall instantly troop, bag and baggage, and you may think yourself lucky to get off so easily.”

“The old one! here’s a ’tarnal fuze and frustration!” exclaimed Mrs. Tenby. “What’s in the wind now? what’s my boy done? He aint a Mohawk, I opinion, that you’re to talk of peppering his dish in this way. Love ye, man! ’twould take ten such as you to do it!”

“Done, Madam! what has he done?—That for which he ought to be horsewhipped all through the county, from Marshwood to Christchurch. He has attempted to seduce my wife! that admirable woman, that exemplary creature; who, after having in vain endeavoured to recall him to a sense of duty, has just been compelled to reveal to me the whole of his villany, and has insisted that he should be instantly expelled from the house.”

“I declare to you, most solemnly,” said Henry, “that I am utterly incapable of the atrocity imputed to me. Mrs. Penguin must be labouring under a grievous misapprehension. Not for worlds would I have deserved this charge. No one can explain so well as Mrs. Penguin how the mistake has originated—to her I refer you; for myself, I will say no more, but I repeat that I am innocent.”

“Mistake! you young prevaricator! What mistake could there be in an affair of this sort, except that you mistook the woman you had to deal with? It was wrong, perhaps, of me to expose you to such a temptation; but what a fine development of character has it afforded me! How has it unmasked the treachery of the pretended friend! How has it confirmed the virtue of the fond and truly attached wife!”

“My lips are sealed,” said Henry; “I have said all that

I can. I was already preparing to quit your house, and I shall do so immediately. I forgive you all your injurious terms, because they proceed from error; and I sincerely hope that the time may soon arrive when you will be convinced that I have done nothing to forfeit your friendship."

"I smell a rat, I smell a rat!"—shouted Mrs. Tenby; who, in her indignation at the charge brought against Henry, and her perfect conviction of its falsehood, suddenly forgot all the prudential and conciliatory maxims she had so recently been inculcating. "If I haven't fathomed the whole plot, I'm up a tree, that's all! My brave boy would never tell a lie, no, not if he had a tomahawk at his throat, and was going to be scalped by the Injuns. What! because I sit half the day up in my own room, can't I see how the cat jumps? Guess I can see more of my nose with one eye shut, than I can when both are open; and if there has been any attempt at seduction in this affair, I conceit that it comes from the other side of the hedge.—Leave me be, Henry, I say; I'll speak my mind right slick, and for your own sake you hadn't ought to stop me."

"Let me beg you, Madam, to say 'ought not,' instead of 'hadn't ought.'"

"Well, this beats all natur! To think of your schooling me, and teaching your grannum to suck eggs, at the very moment she's standing up in your defence! Guess you'll never be fit for any thing but an usher at a grammar-school. Lookee, Mr. Penguin! it's a wise child that knows its own father, and it's a wiser man that knows his own wife. Joes to coppers this is a petticoat plot; and if there's been any wolf in sheep's clothing in this house, it's a she-wolf, I'll swear!"

"I beseech you to leave me without defence, rather than to throw imputations upon any one," said Henry.

"Torment us all! that again's spoken for all the world just like a gump; 'twouldn't be you if 'twan't. But I won't be neither gagged nor gulled. So, brother Penguin, I tell you to your face, that if there's been any wild bird hereabouts, I'll take my oath it's a hen; and, what's more, that she comes out of your own nest; and, what's more still, that her name begins with a P.; and now, if you can't see what I mean, you're a blind buzzard. So, there! that's into you, I rather reckon!"

"Hold your scandalous tongue!" cried Penguin, in fresh

wrath; "I won't listen to your abominable slanders! Would you dare insinuate any thing against that admirable woman, the paragon of her sex? Madam! madam! if these are your Yankee principles, you had better accompany your hopeful son, for my house shall not afford you another night's shelter.

"Yankee principles!" cried Mrs. Tenby, whose American blood was now fairly up, and who began in consequence to pour forth a torrent of Virginian eloquence which drowned all Henry's expostulations, and presently drove Penguin from the room. "Come, boy, let's pack up our duds and begone!" she exclaimed, as soon as the object of her vituperation had escaped, "though it's a 'tarnal shame to send us trampoozing about the country at this time of day!"

Henry willingly assisting her in the operation, they quickly got ready their luggage; and having left word with the servants whither it was to be forwarded, they quitted Grotto-house, without seeking any fresh interview, either with Mr. or Mrs. Penguin, and in due time reached the George at Thaxted, where it was their intention to remain until they should decide upon their future plans.

In the recent rare and spirited assertion of her independence, Mrs. Tenby, taken in the first instance by surprise, had been supported by feelings of pride, anger, and nationality; but during the walk to Thaxted, her passion had gradually subsided, and by the time they had reached the inn, her natural sordidness of character had pretty well recovered its ascendancy. Regret at having lost the immediate advantages of "peck and perch," as well as at the demolition of all the future hopes from Penguin's testamentary dispositions, soured her temper, and prompted her to vent her ill-humour upon Henry, whom she accused as the unlucky cause of all these manifold privations and disappointments. Reminding him, that they were no longer in the free and comfortable quarters of Grotto-house, but at an inn, where they must pay through the nose for every thing, she besought him to be careful of what he ordered, quoting many a Poor Richard maxim upon the duties of economy, and losing no opportunity of endeavouring to wound his feelings, already sufficiently lacerated, by peevish allusions to his unluckiness, his indiscretion, and his gullibility. To escape from this petty persecution, Henry was glad to retire to his bed, where, however, his anxiety of mind would not for some time allow

him to sleep. Mrs. Penguin's most extraordinary and unexpected charge against him, and the assent that would probably be yielded to it by the world, as readily as it had found credence with Penguin, prepared him for encountering general obloquy and reproach ; a visitation which, even when unmerited, it was difficult to bear, and to which Henry was the more keenly sensitive, because he had been not less scrupulous in the observance, than honourably solicitous to obtain the reputation of moral rectitude. Perhaps he was still more hurt on Mrs. Penguin's account than on his own. Of so celestial a quality did he consider the native purity of the female mind, that every one who lapsed from the heaven of her virtue, he contemplated as an addition to the number of the fallen angels ; and in the case upon which his thoughts were dwelling, the malignant falsehood, and the dark revenge to which she had had recourse, proved to him how rapid and deplorable is the fall when the paths of purity are once deserted, a humiliating reflection, which he could not make without feeling as if his own moral dignity had been lowered. Mrs. Penguin, indeed, was but an exception ; she could not shake his general confidence in the sex ; but his mind was saddened and depressed, and in this temporary access of morbid feeling, he could not revert to Emily Welbeck, and to her mysterious assignation in the Forest, without misgivings and sinkings of the heart, to which, at any other moment, he would not have been subjected. Agitated by various conjectures and resolves, he remained for a long time awake ; but the consoling reflection, that whatever might happen he was innocent ; that he had, during the course of that most anxious day, meritoriously resisted two temptations of the most opposite character ; and that a causeless despondency was ingratitude to Heaven, at length enabled him to tranquillize his mind, and to forget himself in sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

If thou lovest her,
 Or entertainest a hope to blast my wishes,
 Thou art a traitor, Arcite, and a fellow
 False as thy title to her : friendship, blood,
 And all the ties between us I disclaim,
 If thou once think upon her.

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

A FEW hours repose, and a few minutes morning reflection, restored to Henry that firm tone of moral courage which was the characteristic of his mind. If it could not be altogether affirmed that his "bosom's lord sate lightly on its throne," it might be said with truth that his temporary depression had vanished, and that, in the consciousness of his soul being free from stain, he was prepared to endure with fortitude whatever annoyances or vexations might be entailed upon him by the malignant fabrications of Mrs. Penguin. Well aware that injurious rumours are commonly aggravated by each fresh reporter, and anxious to anticipate Emily's knowledge of the recent occurrences at Grotto-house, he resolved to make another and an immediate attempt at gaining an interview with her, to which he was impelled not less by the desire of exculpating himself before-hand, than by his anxiety to obtain, if possible, some explanation of the meeting, or rather the assignation in the Forest. This he considered to be now quite as necessary upon her account as his own, since Mrs. Penguin, who had been equally a spectator of the transaction, and who, under present circumstances, was not likely to put any restraints upon her tongue, might circulate calumnies in the neighbourhood calculated to wound most deeply the feelings of so sensitive a being as Emily, even if they did not ruin her reputation.

Influenced by these considerations, he walked over, at an early hour in the morning, to the Manor-house, revolving in his mind the most delicate way of stating the object of his visit. On his entering the great hall, the end of which was fitted up like a small court of law, he beheld Welbeck, sitting as a magistrate in an elevated arm-chair, surrounded by a

posse of gamekeepers and others, whose depositions he was taking against a gang of poachers, the latter being easily recognised by their chop-fallen looks and pinioned arms, while the table was covered with the game which they had snared on the preceding night. Beckoning Henry to his side, the justice requested him to walk up-stairs to the room over the porch, as he was particularly anxious to have his opinion of an old play which Emy had at length found, after a long search ; adding, that its perusal would afford him amusement during the half-hour that would elapse before he himself should be able to despatch the business upon which he was then occupied. Henry would have much rather received an invitation to join his young and interesting daughter in the parlour, than to sit in judgment upon an old drama, amid the dusty quartos, and loaded fire-arms, which imparted such a sombre character to Welbeck's own room ; but not wishing his visit to assume the appearance of being pointedly made to Emily, whom he hoped to encounter before he again quitted the house, he proceeded to the porch-room.

Fortune favoured him beyond his expectations, for on entering the apartment, he beheld Emily standing on a chair, with her back towards the door, replacing one of the ponderous, black-looking old books. She had no sooner recognised him, than she jumped to the ground, a roseate suffusion, and a soft sweet smile lighting up her usually pale and pensive features, and as she advanced towards him, she exclaimed with an animated voice, " Oh, Mr. Melcomb ! I was so vexed when I found you had called yesterday, during my absence ; and I am so glad I have found the old play-book that was missing ! I was determined never to cease hunting for it, for I thought its perusal might afford you pleasure."

There was nothing particular in her words, nothing in her manner, beyond its customary cordiality and benignity ; to explain the magical effect of her looks and accents upon Henry would therefore be impossible ; but a lover may understand us when we state, that they carried to his heart an instantaneous, a thrilling, an electrical conviction, of her unalterable truth and stainless purity. Any doubts that might have lurked in the recesses of his bosom would have been chased away at once ; but there were none, and his face confessed the implicit trust and delighted exhilaration of his soul, as he exclaimed, " Oh ! Miss Welbeck ! I cannot tell you how assured and happy I feel at this moment. The first

sight of you, and the first sound of your voice, have filled me with pleasant and holy thoughts, and with a steadfast faith. But let me not allude to misgivings, which it was sinful in me to have entertained, even for a moment. I have much to say to you,—much that is of a confidential nature, and of deep moment to both of us ; and as I know not how long we may be left without interruption, I must request the favour of your listening to me now."

He reached a chair for Emily, who sate timidly down in it, blushing deeply, her bosom beginning to heave, and her downcast eyes being fixed upon the floor. Henry placed himself beside her, and continued, " If I hate any thing upon earth, it is a lie. I claim no merit for my sincerity and truth, since I believe them to be constitutional in me, and I could not knowingly utter a falsehood without doing a violence to my nature. I say not this boastfully, but to induce you, by your knowledge of my character, to yield me your entire belief, when I most solemnly assure you that I am innocent of the atrocious charges which, as I much fear, you will shortly hear coupled with the name of Henry Melcomb."

" With your name !" faltered Emily, her looks still bent upon the ground ; " with yours ! Can any thing dishonourable be attributed to *you* ?"

" Yes, worse than dishonourable ; every thing that is base and infamous. You will hear that I have been guilty of an act of ingratitude, the very mention of which makes me shudder—that I have attempted to rob my friend and benefactor of the affections of his wife."

" Impossible ! who has dared to invent so monstrous a calumny ?" exclaimed Emily, throwing up her head, looking at her companion with an expression of indignant surprise, little in accordance with her habitual meekness, and again suddenly casting down her eyes in blushing confusion.

" Thank you, thank you a thousand times for your generous confidence, for your disbelief of this most cruel aspersion ; and if I cannot explain the circumstances under which I have quitted Mr. Penguin's roof, I implore you to put a charitable construction upon my silence."

" From my knowledge of your sentiments and actions, I will never, never, never believe that you could have even contemplated any thing depraved, still less so detestable a crime as this !"

" Most fervently, most gratefully do I repeat my thanks for

your good opinion, which will support me, however I may be assailed by the shafts of slander. And now, Miss Welbeck, it is my painful duty to apprise you, that you yourself may be exposed to misrepresentations, nay, to the most calumnious surmises and insinuations from a circumstance respecting which my own lips would remain for ever sealed, but of which another was unfortunately an eyewitness as well as myself. Nothing but my regard for your honour would have urged me to mention the occurrence, but this being my motive, I do not consider any apology necessary for what I am about to state, nor for the perfect frankness with which I shall make the communication."

Emily was silent, but she raised herself up in her chair, her eyes were now fixed upon her companion, and her half-open mouth betokened expectation and surprise. But as Henry proceeded succinctly to relate what himself and Mrs. Penguin had seen, not omitting their surprise at the embraces bestowed upon Emily by the stranger, her distress and agitation became excessive, she trembled violently, the colour rushed to her cheeks, brow, and bosom, again leaving them of an ashy whiteness, she panted audibly, and more than once essayed to speak, but seemed unable to give utterance to her words.

As Henry remarked all this with a transfixed attention, Mrs. Penguin's sinister words—"Question her, and if her confusion do not confirm her guilt, my name's not Laura Penguin," recurred involuntarily to his mind; but he drove away the recollection, just as he would shut his eyes upon a hateful apparition, contemplating with the most profound and tender sympathy the countenance of his companion, which remained agitated with the struggle of vehement emotions. Evidently striving to command herself, she more than once attempted to speak, but her efforts proving ineffectual, she at length burst suddenly into a passion of tears, and sobbed with an almost hysterical violence.

"Gracious Heaven!" ejaculated Henry, in great agitation and distress. "What have I said? what have I done? Wretch that I am! to have wounded—shall I call for help? shall I fly for succour?"

"No, no, no; not for the world!" sobbed Emily, staying him with her hand. "I shall be better in a moment. I should have died, or gone into a fit, had I not been relieved by these tears. I shall be composed presently; forgive this
Vol. II.—9

agitation : don't quit me, I shall be able to speak to you shortly." Suffering her tears to flow unrestrained for a brief space, she became comparatively calm, and after having sighed deeply, she exclaimed, "It was too much for me; I am naturally timid, my nerves have been shaken by sorrow and perpetual apprehension, and I could not bear to imagine that the world, above all, that you, Sir, should think lightly of me—should suppose me capable of—Indeed! indeed! Mr. Melcomb, I am innocent! Good God! what a deep humiliation, that I should be called on to make the avowal!" She pressed her lips closely together, the muscles of her mouth were convulsed, and the tears again flowed rapidly down her cheeks.

Penetrated at once with love, compassion, and regret, at this most touching spectacle, Henry bitterly accused himself as the cause of her distress; assuring her, however, as he tenderly implored her to be comforted, that he required no explanation himself, since he believed her to be pure as angels, but that he had thought it right she should be prepared to repel the malicious constructions and slanders of Mrs. Penguin. "To me, to my heart," he passionately exclaimed, "one single look of that sinless face affords a deeper conviction of your innocence, than all the exculpatory evidence that my senses are fashioned to receive."

"Thank you! thank you! God bless you!" cried Emily, unconsciously grasping his hand in emotion, and then blushing crimson deep at the fancied impropriety of the action: "What a cruel, what an extraordinary fate is mine!" she continued, speaking rapidly, as if to recover from her own confusion, as well as to withdraw Henry's attention from the liberty she had inadvertently taken—"Heaven knows, that I had already cares and sorrows enough, without this new and still more agonising trial. It is horrible to have my name traduced, and perhaps to have my fame destroyed for ever by such a woman as Mrs. Penguin, especially when I knew that I would rather die a thousand deaths than commit the crime of which she suspects me; but such is the peculiar hardship of my fate, that I must not, cannot, will not reveal the facts that would triumphantly clear me at once, and cover my slanderers with shame."

"The reasons for your silence I firmly believe to be not less honourable than imperative," said Henry. "Perhaps they are only temporary in their nature, but at all events

truth and innocence are eternal, and will ultimately establish themselves against all the contumelies that malice can invent."

"I would fain hope so :—a day will doubtless come, when I shall be able to exculpate myself to you, to all the world, but in the mean time I must submit to my wrongs. How strange a similarity there exists in our respective fates! You are assailed with derogatory charges of which you know yourself to be perfectly guiltless, but which circumstances will not allow you to explain away; so am I. You implore me to believe you innocent, and from my knowledge of your character I put implicit confidence in your protestations. I make the same avowment of my untainted purity, and you put your whole trust in my simple assertion. Let the world then malign and slander us as it will, but never let it shake our firm reliance upon each other's integrity."

"Generous, pure, and high-minded Miss Welbeck! I feel honoured by your proposal, and thus do I solemnly ratify our mutual contract."—He took her hand, pressed it respectfully to his lips, and was about to follow up this act of trust and homage by a formal declaration of his love, when Emily, suddenly withdrawing her hand, exclaimed, "Hist! I hear a footstep. Perhaps my father is coming. He must not see that I have been weeping, for I conceal my sorrows from him as much as possible. Your communication, distressing as it has been, is in some degree atoned for by the proof which it has afforded me of your generous confidence in my honour.—Farewell! Farewell!" So saying, she waved her hand, and hurried out of the room.

Left to himself, Henry remained for some time plunged in deep reflection upon the scene that had just past, and the mysterious declaration he had heard. His trust in Emily being now implicit and invulnerable, it must have been some latent feeling of curiosity that led him rather to regret her not having been more explanatory; but, whatever was the source of the sensation, he did feel it, and busied himself in vain conjectures, as he attempted to reconcile perfect innocence with the inexplicable assignation in the Forest. At one moment he regretted that he had lost so favourable an opportunity of declaring his attachment, especially after having ingratiated himself by his confidence in her integrity; and in the next he thought that all confession of his love

should be postponed until an *éclaircissement* had taken place, and the mystery should be cleared up.

While he was thus occupied, the door was gently opened, and Emily reappeared, blushing, and looking confused, though her eyes had nearly recovered their brilliancy, and her countenance no longer wore so deep an expression of wo. "My father is still engaged in the hall," she said, "and likely to be detained for some time longer, and I have therefore ventured back to say—I fear you will be surprised at my vacillation, but I have been reflecting—I have been taking counsel of my own heart, and I find that I could not bear—that I should be miserable were I to leave you in the dark, as to the meeting in the Forest, of which you were a witness. In spite of your reliance upon my truth, in spite even of your own magnanimous and some mingiving, some suspicion might steal into your mind, and I could not exist if I thought that you entertained a moment's doubt of me. I know your strict reverence for truth, and it is only because the safety, perhaps the life of another is concerned, that I must exact your promise never to reveal what I am now about to divulge to you."

"I do not require this explanation, my dear Miss Welbeck, to satisfy my own mind; but if you think proper to make it voluntarily, I promise that whatever you communicate shall remain a profound secret."

"Enough! enough! you shall know all, and I am the more induced to make this disclosure, because I want a friend and counsellor who may assist me with his advice. It is hard for a poor timid girl like me to be left to struggle unassisted with such dangers, sorrows, and sore perplexities, as I have had to encounter." She opened the door to ascertain that no one was in the passage, or within hearing, shut it again gently, seated herself in the chair by Henry, cast a timorous glance around the room, and then resumed in an almost whispering voice,—“And now, to come first to that point which will remove from me an imputation to which I cannot even refer without a burning of my cheeks, know that the man with whom I made the assignation in the forest, is my own, my only brother. Oh! that brother, that degraded, prodigal, and ill-starred, though still beloved brother! what miseries has he already heaped upon himself, and all of us! and what additional sufferings may he still entail upon me, from the slanders to which this luckless

meeting may give rise! To understand how critically he is circumstanced, you must hear his melancholy story, which shall be told you in as few words as possible. Educated to be a gentleman, and considered as the undoubted heir of all the wealth which my father is known to have accumulated, poor Godfrey, for that is my brother's name, was early surrounded by parasites and profligates, who, taking advantage of his pliability of mind and natural proneness to dissipation, seduced him into errors and excesses of every description. My father, who doted on him, repeatedly paid his debts, but a fatal passion for gaming rendering it impossible to keep him clear from embarrassments and final ruin, he was abandoned to his evil courses, in the hope that difficulties and sufferings might reclaim him. Alas! they only plunged him into deeper criminality. Blinded by some inexplicable infatuation of his own passions, or falling a victim to the artifices of others, I knew not which, he was decoyed into a marriage with a low, an abandoned, an infamous woman. As he was known to be the only son of a rich man, his loose companions had engaged him in drawing or accepting bills for the purpose of raising money, and in these transactions he became implicated in some irregularity which has been pronounced to be a forgery. This must have been from sheer ignorance, for with all his faults, I believe him incapable of such a crime as this, and so indeed he himself most solemnly avers."

"Unfortunate young man!" ejaculated Henry; "what anxiety and distress must he have occasioned to his family! How did your father bear this accumulation of disgrace?"

"You must have seen enough of his temper to know, that whether in his likes or dislikes, he is violent almost to a morbid excess; but you do not know the fierce and ungovernable whirlwinds of passion to which he is sometimes subjected. At this wretched consummation of all Godfrey's follies and misdeeds, at the prospect of the ignominy in which his whole family might be involved, my father, whose affections had been already in a considerable degree estranged, fell upon his knees, solemnly cursed his son, and threatened me with the same awful malediction if I ever mentioned his name. Sometimes, though very rarely, he will himself speak of him as 'the wretch whom I have cursed;' but he allows nobody else to allude to him, and it is needless to add that he has disinherited him for ever."

"And is this bitter and most aggravating disappointment of all his hopes the cause of that unhappy state of mind with which Mr. Welbeck is afflicted?"

"It is *one* of the causes," replied Emily; and then quickly reverting to the story of her unfortunate brother, she continued—"Poor Godfrey soon discovered the real character of the wife who had been imposed upon him as a respectable woman, and whose dissolute habits and character made an incalculable addition to his miseries. To escape from the horrors and humiliation of such a home, from the bailiffs who were pursuing him for his wife's debts as well as his own, and from threatened arrest upon a criminal charge, my wretched brother fled secretly from London, the scene of all his follies, and travelling by night into this neighbourhood, concealed himself in the most sequestered recesses of the New Forest. Well knowing that the sight of him, in my father's irritated state of mind, might have goaded him to madness, Godfrey never approached the Manor-house; but he contrived to acquaint me with his situation; he made me the medium of communication with his law agent in London; he occasionally appointed, in the secluded parts of the Forest, places of meeting where we might see and consult with each other; and to these assignments he always came in the vulgar disguise which he habitually wears for his better security against discovery. A long and painful illness had prevented his seeing me for some time previous to that rencontre of which you were a witness, and it was in the exhilaration of restored health, and of an ever-affectionate, though misguided heart, that he bestowed upon me those embraces which naturally excited so much surprise in your mind, and such ungenerous and unfeminine suspicions in that of Mrs. Penguin."

"I was sure, quite confident, my dear Miss Welbeck, that whenever you thought proper to explain the motives of your conduct, they would redound to your honour, and most fully have my expectations been realized."

"You see now," resumed Emily, "why I could not make a similar exposition to the world. A whisper of this nature might occasion the arrest of my brother; and God knows what consequences might follow his imprisonment! I should have added, that from the time of our childhood we have ever been sincerely attached to one another; and that all his subsequent misconduct, much as I deplore it, has not

alienated him from my heart; for though he sadly wants firmness of character, and was always of a dissipated turn, he is by no means naturally vicious. I am in correspondence with his law agent, whom I have supplied with funds for investigating the criminal charge in which Godfrey is implicated, and if we can clear him from this, I am not altogether without hope that, in some lucky moment, I may effect his reconciliation with my father.—Mr. Melcomb, are you satisfied? Is there any other point that you wish me to elucidate? If there be, state it fearlessly and frankly, and I promise you an instant and an honest answer.”

“Satisfied, Miss Welbeck! I am more than satisfied. I am filled with a still deeper admiration and reverence for your character than I before entertained, exalted as was my estimate of your virtues.”

“Nay, Sir, I did not ask for a compliment, but rather for a charge, or at least for an interrogatory, that I might complete my defence. If all your doubts are cleared up, I have only to thank you for listening so patiently to my exculpation; and as I have kept you long enough from the book I found for you, I will not now make a farther trespass upon your time.”

“Trespass! it is one which you will always delight me by repeating. You must not go, indeed you must not, until you have heard me. There is still a most important point upon which I would entreat for explanation, one in which my happiness is deeply concerned. You have said that you wish for a counsellor to assist you in the most arduous and critical duties you have to perform for your poor brother, and I would fain give myself a better title to that office than can be possessed by a mere acquaintance, however you may respect his honour and his judgment. According to the usages of the world, I am aware that I am about to commit a great act of presumption; but I believe that there are many of these practices of which you, as well as myself, cannot acknowledge the rationality.”

Emily coloured deeply, and began to tremble.

“You have desired me, Miss Welbeck, to be frank and fearless, which I should have been without this kind permission, both because it is my nature to be so at all times, and because, where our happiness is concerned, I think all false delicacy and reserve should give way to a manly, straight-forward sincerity. In one word, then, I love you—love you

with the first ardent homage of a pure uncontaminated heart, and if I may be permitted—”

“Oh no, indeed, indeed, Mr. Melcomb,” interposed Emily, in increased agitation, “nothing of this sort can be permitted. Think not of it again, speak of it no more, I beseech you. It is utterly, utterly hopeless; and to entertain such a wild project will but irritate my father, and add to the already overflowing measure of my troubles.”

“If I know my own heart,” exclaimed Henry, “I would rather tear it from my bosom than occasion you any fresh discomfort; but I would respectfully appeal to that frankness in yourself which you desired me to exercise, when I beseech you to declare whether the difficulties which you state to be insuperable, proceed from any personal objections of your own. In that case—”

“What personal objections can I have to one whose character—I fear I must have acted very wrong, but when I found such pleasure in your society, I am sure I never thought—pleasure of any sort is to me so rare a sensation, that I did not reflect as I ought to have done. Forgive me, Mr. Melcomb, I am sadly confused, I scarcely know what I say; but I meant to remind you of poor Godfrey’s state, over whose head there still hangs a criminal charge; to recall to your recollection my father’s mental maladies, of which you have witnessed something, though you know not the frightful extent to which they are sometimes carried. You must have observed that I generally appear anxious and unhappy. Have I not cause for my dejection, and under such circumstances can you expect me to consult my own happiness, or to dream of marriage? My father, moreover, is not in a fit state to be left, and I will never, never abandon him.”

“Yet your father himself, as it is rumoured, urges your marriage with Lord Fawley.”

“Whom I know, from the authority of his physician, to be a dying man, and I have therefore offered no opposition to my father’s projects, well aware that they were futile, and not wishing to occasion him any unnecessary irritation. For the same most weighty reasons, I dispute not beforehand his ambitious schemes for my advancement; but should the moment arrive when my duty to my Heavenly Father requires me to disobey my earthly parent, I trust that my prayers and my sense of rectitude will inspire me with courage sufficient for the trial. No human consideration shall force me to the

altar to commit a perjury. I will never marry one whom I do not reverence as well as love."

"But if you could unite yourself to one who would not require you to quit your father's side, who would be too happy to dwell with you beneath his roof, to become his companion and his friend, to share your filial attentions, to assist you in the blessed office of endeavouring to reconcile him to his son."

"Oh, Mr. Melcomb! do not flatter my poor wounded heart with visions of happiness that can never be realized. You do not know my father fully. He has set his whole-concentrated desires upon seeing me advanced to dignities and titles."

"But if I could show him the folly of these lofty expectations, and reconcile him to an humbler son-in-law, might I have your sanction for aspiring to that honour?"

"Do not, in pity do not urge me upon this point. I dare not utter an untruth; it is not necessary that I should make any declaration whatever, for my father is a stern, inexorable man, to whom arguments and entreaties of this tendency would be all addressed in vain. He must not be exasperated—he is entitled to my duty—he requires pity and forbearance, not provocation.—See! yonder are the poachers retiring through the park, the examination is over, he will be here immediately. Oh, Sir! do not apply to him, do not say any thing to hurt the feelings of my dear, unhappy father!" —At these words the poor blushing, trembling girl, curtsied to Henry without daring to look at him, and hurried out of the room.

Welbeck being still detained for some time longer in the Hall, Henry had leisure to revolve in his mind the conversation he had just been holding, and which, although it was not unmingled with painful sensations, had left a predominance of delicious impressions upon his heart. The paramount consideration that Emily was attached to him, for though her lips had not made this entrancing avowal, her manner had unequivocally betrayed it, was potent enough to fill him with hope, and blinded him to all the difficulties that opposed his suit; difficulties which, to a mere man of the world, would at once have appeared insuperable. But Henry, who contemplated the abstract propriety of things, much more than the established notions and customs of the world, saw no reason whatever why he should not aspire to the hand of Miss Welbeck, the rich heiress, nor why he should respect the

absurd mistake of a father who would sacrifice his daughter's happiness to his own project of ambition. As to those paroxysms of rage to which Welbeck was subject, he knew not why his proposition should excite them, nor if it did, why he should fear them. He thought Emily humoured her father's morbid eccentricities too much, his own observation and experience convincing him that a resolute opposition controlled his vehemence much better than a timid acquiescence. Henry was by nature frank, fearless, and decided; he hated suspense, and thus impelled, he resolved to inform Welbeck immediately of his attachment to his daughter, and to demand her in marriage.

Just as he had formed this determination, the Justice entered the room. "Well, young man," he cried, as he advanced, rubbing his hands, "What say you to the new master, to the fresh magician whom Emily has conjured from his hiding-place? What! shall we to work upon him, and forget these sorry poachers, whom I have just committed to prison, in the spirit-stirring adventures of Claudia and Rinaldo?"

"I have not yet opened the volume, for my own anxieties, and the interests of real life are of more momentous import to me at present than any fiction of the dramatist or the poet."

"Are they? Then hasten to forget them, and strive, like me, to lose the wretched realities of existence in the world of imagination. But you are not like me. You have not forfeited your happiness; it is assured, and at your own command; it does not depend upon another."

"Pardon me, Sir, it *does* depend in a very essential degree upon another—upon yourself!"

"Upon me, young man! You are pleased to be enigmatical, and I have no genius for solving riddles."

"Nor have I the smallest disposition to propound them. Favour me with your attention for a few minutes, and I will explain my meaning with the most perfect frankness and perspicuity." Henry then stated, shortly and explicitly, that in the numerous interviews and conversations with Miss Welbeck, which he had recently had the happiness of enjoying, her charms and virtues had made a profound impression upon his heart; that he believed there existed a considerable congeniality of disposition between them; that he was confident he could make her happy; and that he therefore solicited the paternal sanction for paying her his addresses."

"You are pleased to be facetious, Sir," said Welbeck, who, in spite of the seriousness of Henry's manner, could not believe him to be in earnest; "is this a quotation from some play, or a sudden freak and *capriccio* of your own?"

"I never assert any thing that is false, not even in sport; and I should have hoped that my look and manner, not less than the peculiar delicacy of the subject, would have assured you that I am in earnest."

"Then, Sir, either you or I must be labouring under a temporary hallucination of mind. Methought I was addressing Mr. Henry Melcomb."

"Upon that subject you are not in error; you cannot so soon have forgotten me."

"Ha! then it was only your birthplace, and the names of your parents, that had slipped my memory."

"If this be meant as a taunt, it is really one that I do not feel; because it is not my fault, but my misfortune, that I know not either my place of birth, or the names of my parents. I am not ashamed of being weighed by myself alone. If I have any worth, the want of ancestors cannot deprive me of it. If I have none, no pedigree could atone for my being without it."

"Very true and pointed, and yet very little to the point. You are aware, as I shrewdly conjecture, that Miss Welbeck is likely to be one of the richest heiresses in Hampshire?"

"I have heard so, but this constitutes no part of her attraction in my eyes."

"How singularly disinterested; and what implicit credit should we yield to such an assertion, especially when we recollect that your own fortune consists of——"

"One hundred pounds a year, as I have already stated."

"Or in other words, you are a pauper. May I then venture respectfully to inquire, what it is you propose to bestow upon my daughter in return for her charms, her virtues, and her wealth?"

"Myself!" exclaimed Henry, drawing himself up with an honest pride—"A healthy frame, a sound mind, a heart that has never yet been contaminated by vice or dissipation, principles as honourable and as upright as her own, and a resolution to consecrate all these to the promotion of her happiness."

Welbeck, who had hitherto spoken with a look and tone of the most cutting and contemptuous irony, now threw

himself back in his chair, and uttered a sardonic "Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Perhaps it appears ridiculous to you," resumed Henry, with great calmness, "that a pauper, as you term him, should aspire to your daughter's hand; but if so, it is you who are ridiculous, not I, since it is precisely because you are yourself opulent, that you can afford to dispense with riches in your son-in-law. As a disciple of Malthus, I should not myself have presumed to offer myself for Miss Welbeck, were it not reasonable to suppose that you would assist in the maintenance of your own daughter. The amount of her portion is to me a matter of perfect indifference; it would depend, of course, upon your own generosity, or your own wishes as to her style of living; but as you would probably not desire to lose the pleasure of her society, the Manor-house might still continue to be her home."

"And you would doubtless condescend to make it yours too. I thought so. Matchless spirit of accommodation! Now, Sir, favour me with *your* attention for one minute, since I have listened to your outrageous, your frantic proposition, with a calmness at which I am myself utterly amazed. I have only one single question to ask of you. Did Miss Welbeck in any way authorize you to make this application to me?"

"Certainly not: on the contrary, she desired me never to mention the subject, either to herself, or to you; and yet——"

"Ha! that is well; it has taken a load from my heart, and I can breathe more freely. I want not to hear any more. Emy is a good girl; she would not share the fate of the wretch whom I have cursed; she would not be spurned from me for ever with unutterable loathing, hatred, and disgust; she would not be disinherited, and see the proud fortune that is destined for her, if she obeys my wishes, bequeathed to an hospital! As for you, Sir, this is my answer: Rather than give my consent to your marriage with my daughter, I would see her, dear as she is to me, lying in a shroud at my feet. The very preposterousness of your presumption has smothered up my anger in contemptuous wonderment; but though I confess that I have heretofore found pleasure in your society, I now cast off your acquaintance utterly and for ever. I shall order the doors of the Manor-house to be shut against you; and I warn you not to irritate a temper

which may quickly be driven to desperation and fearful violence, by again presenting yourself within these walls, or presuming to seek any sort of communication with my daughter.—Not a word, Sir, not a syllable! I will not hear you. Begone! and return no more.”

So saying, Welbeck suddenly quitted the room, his rapid tread being heard outside, as he hurried along the passage that led to the back of the building; while Henry, reluctantly quitting the house which he had been so imperiously forbidden never to revisit, and to the very walls of which he had now become attached, since it was the residence of his beloved Emily, proceeded slowly and disconsolately across the park on his way back to Thaxted.

CHAPTER IX.

Why are you virtuous?

And wherefore are you gentle, strong, and valiant?

Knew you not, master, to some kind of men

Their graces serve them but as enemies?

No more do yours: your virtues, gentle master,

Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.

Oh! what a world is this, when what is comely

Envenoms him that bears it!

AS YOU LIKE IT.

HENRY was now destined to experience in a very marked and painful manner the evanescent nature of popularity. He upon whom greatness, or, at least, nominal riches, had so lately been thrust by the mistakes and wilful exaggerations of the vain and officious Penguins, and who had in consequence received most worshipful homage from the Dons and Hidalgos of the vicinity, but more especially from those provident mammas who had portionless daughters to settle: he, who, as the successful and generous champion of the fair, had been the theme and darling of the commonalty, was shortly considered by a great portion of both classes as little better than an unprincipled, designing adventurer and fortune-hunter, who had come into Hampshire to see what he could pick up. This rapid revolution in public opinion was

chiefly effected by the revengeful malice and indefatigable tongue of Mrs. Penguin; who, as if determined to exemplify the assertion, that "Hell has no fury like a woman scorned," lost no opportunity of traducing and blackening his character. According to her present version of circumstances, they had themselves been most shamefully imposed upon, in being given to understand that Henry was a near relation of the late most respectable Captain Tenby, whereas there was good reason to believe that he was a poor foundling, the probable offspring of vice and poverty, who had been adopted out of mere charity. His imaginary wealth was now positively affirmed to have been a fabrication of his own, for which none but the most fraudulent motives could be assigned. His intrepidity and humanity in the business of the smugglers at Hordle Cliff, was attributed to a secret connexion with some of the gang, and a presumable interest in their cargo; and as to the affair of Lucy Haselgrove, it was plainly insinuated that he had himself, with an unexampled baseness, completed the ruin of that unhappy young woman, and had only turned her off and married her to Hodge Nettletop, when he became tired of her.

But it was for an alleged attempt upon her own virtue, that Mrs. Penguin reserved the most circumstantial and the most malevolent of her inventions. As it afforded her a fine opportunity for indulging her rancour against Henry, and establishing at the same time the unassailable purity of her own character against all future impugnors, she acted the Lucretia with prodigious bustle and loquacity; running about from house to house to detail the insidious and incessant artifices by which he had attempted to seduce her from the paths of duty, the repeated efforts she had made to bring him to a due sense of his unprincipled conduct, and the pain with which she had at last found herself compelled to communicate his nefarious designs to her husband. When, in addition to all these insinuations and positive charges, it came to be publicly known that Henry had applied offensive terms to Captain Frampton, and then refused to fight him, it need excite little wonder that few could be found bold enough to stand up in his defence, or that many of his former acquaintance began pointedly to slight and avoid him. People had much rather be deceived into a bad opinion of a neighbour than into a good one, because they can much better afford to throw away scorn and abuse than charity and approba-

tion. They who had erroneously endowed Henry with opulence and high connexions, indignant at having been defrauded of their respect, even by their own mistake, now made ample amends by yielding an eager belief to all the disparaging rumours with which he was bespattered; and if two wrongs can make one right, there is no doubt that they were justified in acting as they did.

To this ungenerous conduct there were, however, several honourable exceptions. Among the better classes, honest Frank Ringwood was Henry's staunchest supporter. Having reasons of his own for strongly suspecting Mrs. Penguin's arrogated purity, he cross-questioned the supposed delinquent as to the real state of the case; but Henry, remembering his pledge, refused to exonerate himself at the expense of a female, although she was at that moment endeavouring to ruin him with her calumnies. Ringwood was not the less persuaded of his innocence, and supported his opinion with his usual independence; by increasing their intimacy, and vindicating his friend wherever he went. Among the villagers, too, Henry retained many admirers and adherents, the most active and pugnacious of the whole party being Hodge Nettletop, who, throwing off his coat and waistcoat one market-day, in the midst of the assembled neighbourhood, offered to fight any man for half a guinea and a gallon of beer, who should dare to say that Mr. Melcomb was not as brave a fellow and as true a gentleman as any in all Hampshire. It was particularly remarked that Bat Haselgrove the cartwright, who was supposed to have owed Henry a grudge ever since the wrestling-match at the fair, did not think proper to accept this challenge, though he was within hearing at the time it was thrown out.

As if all these slights, and slanders, and external annoyances had not been sufficient, Henry had to encounter the sordid spleen and ill-humour of Mrs. Tenby; who reproached him incessantly with having ruined all their fair prospects, and peevishly urged him to quit a neighbourhood where they were treated for all the world like Mohawks or Negroes. He could not bear, however, to withdraw from the vicinage of Emily Welbeck, whom he still hoped to encounter in one of his daily rambles; not without a vague expectation that some fortunate chance, though he could not define its nature, might effect a renewal of their intimacy, and remove the objections of her father. Nor was he in the least disposed to

quit Thaxted while his name and his character remained under a cloud.

"No, Madam!" he exclaimed to Mrs. Tenby, "I will meet my detractors face to face, and day by day. To turn my back upon them now, and to retreat, would be construed into an admission of my guilt. Truth, like the sun, may be clouded and obscured for a time, but it is not extinguished; it may wait to choose its own opportunity for breaking out, but it will, it must ultimately prevail. You express wonder that I am as cheerful and self-possessed as if nothing had happened to me; but it is under trials such as these that true fortitude asserts itself. The good opinion of our neighbours is doubtless desirable; but if they ignorantly or maliciously pursue us with unmerited obloquy, we are not, by sinking into despondency, to punish ourselves for the faults or mistakes of others. Not the imputation, but the commission of a crime, should make us miserable; and it is the great charm of virtue, that renders a man independent of the world, by enabling him to derive his happiness from his own bosom."

To elevated sentiments such as these, Mrs. Tenby generally replied by some poor Richard apophthegm, or a querulous Jeremiade in the doric dialect of Virginia, which, being not less offensive to the grammatical sensitiveness of Henry's ear, than repugnant to his moral notions, exposed him to endurance within doors that taxed his temper and his forbearance still more severely than the slights he was compelled to undergo whenever he went abroad. In both, however, he conquered: he never lost his temper or his self-possession; his brave, indomitable spirit was not to be quelled by any combination of circumstances, however untoward; or if his equanimity ever for a moment failed him, it was when he thought of Emily Welbeck and her trials, not when he reflected upon his own.

At this period Lady Susan Frampton, in pursuance of her plan for inveigling Lord Mossdale, and making him enamoured of Oakham-hall and her eldest daughter, by a succession of entertainments, projected an extensive party of pleasure in the Forest, the sequestered walks of which she deemed more favourable to the developement of the tender passion, and the enjoyment of an interesting *tête-à-tête*, or regular declaration, than crowded drawing-rooms, and numerous listeners. Often and long did she sit in consultation

with Miss Frampton, and sometimes with the Captain, making arrangements as to the individuals of whom the party should consist, and the spot that should form the object of their excursion. As to the former point, in addition to one or two of the neighbouring families whom we have not found it necessary to introduce into our pages, it was resolved to invite the Dotterels; Ringwood, Emily Welbeck, whom they settled to take in their own carriage, lest her father should offer to join the party, and the Penguins; the latter being avowedly included for the purpose of affording amusement by their vulgarity. As to Henry, he was of course entirely out of the question; even if the imputations under which he laboured had not been sufficient to exclude him, his alleged low birth and acknowledged poverty were insuperable bars to his admission at Oakham-hall. These preliminaries were adjusted with much more facility than the decision of the place they were to visit, and the spot they were to select for their dinner; which it was intended to have *al fresco*, beneath the boughs of trees, in some romantic recess of the forest. The triangular stone set up near Minstead to commemorate the spot where William Rufus was slain; the Marlpit Oak; Bûrley Hill, on account of its grand view; the celebrated yew-tree in Dibdin Churchyard; and Cadenham Oak, in the vicinity of Lyndhurst, which, in rivalry of the celebrated Glastonbury thorn, had the reputation of budding at Christmas, were successively proposed and rejected, some as being too near, others as too distant. Captain Frampton recommended, with a most strenuous indolence of manner, that they should go to see a colt-hunt at Obergreen, in Longslade-Bottom, a bog of three miles in extent, crossed by a mole, along which numbers of the wild forest-horses are occasionally driven, and being intercepted by men concealed in the centre of the causeway, must either suffer themselves to be taken, or jump into the bog, where they are generally secured without difficulty. Upon this proposition, also, a negative was put by Lady Susan, and it was finally decided that they should first visit the ruins of Beaulieu Abbey, proceed thence to a place called the Fighting Cocks, strike into the romantic woods in the direction of Culverley, and take their dinner in a beautiful little opening known by the name of the Poacher's Lawn. To save trouble, and the annoyance of conveying their own larder and table-paraphernalia, Tim Wicks, of the George, at Thaxted, was ordered to provide a

cold collation at the spot indicated, as well as to supply all the proper requisites for the entertainment of both man and horse; a commission which he undertook with prodigious bustle and alacrity, being not less pleased by the expected profits of the job, than by the prospect of waiting upon so distinguished a company.

Oakham-hall was the place of *rendezvous* whence the assemblage proceeded; Lady Susan's barouche, which led the way, containing, besides her ladyship and her two daughters, Emily Welbeck, who, though she found little delight in society, and had no spirits for parties of pleasure, thought it incumbent upon her not to refuse invitations, or to evince any dislike to company, at a moment when insinuations against her character might be darkly circulating in the neighbourhood. Even the knowledge that the odious Mrs. Penguin was to be of the party, did not deter her from joining it—a sense of duty to herself, and to her fair name, enabling her to conquer her repugnance. Doctor Dotterel's chariot, with his corpulent, club-tailed horses, followed, conveying only Miss Dotterel; for the good-natured Doctor stayed at the Hall to keep company with Mr. Frampton, who was laid up with the gout. Two phaetons and a pony-chaise, belonging to some of the other visitants, came next. Lord Mossdale, Captain Frampton, and Ringwood, were on horseback, and Mr. and Mrs. Penguin were allowed the honour of bringing up the rear, none of the gentlemen having accepted the lady's invitation to make a third in her gig, although she assured them it had been made wide and roomy, on purpose to accommodate a friend.

Proverbial as is the disobliging nature of the English climate, which seems to bear a particular ill-will towards rural parties of pleasure, the weather on the present occasion, proved propitious. When first they started, indeed, the morning was overcast, not darkly, but with a pervading gleaminess, which promised that the suppressed light would eventually pierce through its misty veil. It was a calm, soft, mild day of autumn, the hazy, semi-transparent atmosphere being rather an advantage than a detriment, as it afforded a beautiful medium for viewing the scenery, giving it grandeur and expansion, diffusing a mellow gray tint favourable to distance, and imparting to the landscape the appearance of an unfinished picture. As they advanced, partial sunbeams burst out in the distance, leaving the foreground in shade,

but illuminating remote portions of the view with vivid light ; an effect singularly striking and picturesque when it occurs amid forest scenery, and is favoured, as it happened to be in the present instance, by inequalities of surface. In a short time they lost these contrasts ; the gauzy, filmy atmosphere became gradually thinner and clearer, the sun chased away the last remaining vapours, and an unclouded day allowed them to contemplate the noble forest scenery through which they were riding in all the gorgeous tints of its autumnal drapery.

Every thing assumed a delightful and auspicious appearance, and a smile occasionally irradiated every countenance, except that of the pensive Emily, whose thoughts were upon the absent Henry and her unfortunate brother, when an act of malicious insubordination on the part of Lord Mossdale, threatened to disturb the harmony of some of the party, and to defeat the sole object for which it had been made. This object his Lordship saw through much more easily than Lady Susan imagined, and with an unaccountable perverseness of disposition, began to dislike Miss Frampton, in proportion as her beauty and accomplishments were obtrusively thrust upon his notice, for the palpable purpose of entrapping him ; while he regarded Fanny with increasing admiration, the more she was disparaged by the rest of the family, and the more she herself repelled his attentions, and piqued his pride in her manifest preference of "Farmer" Ringwood. It had been settled, that whenever the party got out of their carriages to walk in the forest, Lord Mossdale should take charge of Augusta, Lady Susan significantly observing, that the dear girl wouldn't be half so happy with any body else ; but as it occurred to the Peer, that he himself would be much happier with another partner, and as he dearly loved, moreover, a little jocular mischief, he resolved to baulk the schemes of the maternal match-maker, to leave the fair "tuft-hunter" to whatever commoner would supply his place, and to anticipate and disappoint Ringwood by securing Fanny for himself. The carriages had struck out of the road, and were ascending a gentle, turfy knoll, to the brow of which the horsemen had all ridden forwards, when Fanny, always exhilarated by the sight of beautiful scenery, began half unconsciously to sing a cheerful ballad ditty, which bore some reference to the New Forest.

"May I inquire your reason for singing now, child, when there is nobody to hear you ?" inquired Lady Susan, vexed

at Fanny's having engrossed so much of Lord Mossdale's attention during their ride.

"Lud! I never do anything for a reason, and therefore I can never give one."

"I thought Lady Susan had been aware of that fact," observed Augusta, tauntingly.

"It is enough for me to be cheerful upon impulse; but I suppose I sang for the same reason as the birds when they have nobody to hear them—because I am happy. Did you ever see any thing so inviting as this gentle grassy slope, nibbled down by the deer till it is as smooth as velvet? Now I warn you all beforehand, that I am going to make one of my silly speeches. I wish to fate there were no such thing in the world as strict propriety, and gentility, and formality of carriage, and *bienséance* and *retenue*, as I believe our neighbours call it; because, if there were no such demure, decorous nuisances in existence, I would have *such* a scamper over this delicious turf! You saw how the horses capered and pranced as soon as they got upon it. Well, my heart is gambolling about in my bosom just in the same way, and my feet are absolutely longing for a race, which I would positively have had with Snowball, if we had brought her with us; for one *may* run a race with a dog, I suppose! you know, Augusta, I have a strong suspicion, that I was meant by Nature to be a wood-nymph?"

"You did well to prepare us for nonsense. I'm sure no one would think you were meant by Nature to be my child," said Lady Susan, snappishly.

"Perhaps Nature meant me to be her own; and if so, it would be undutiful not to call and pay my respects to her. At all events, I cannot bear to be mewed up a moment longer, or to continue seated when I am in so august a presence." So saying, she opened the door of the carriage, which was proceeding very slowly, and jumping upon the turf, exclaimed, "Now, don't be alarmed, Lady Susan; I promise you I will not be vulgar, at least not more than I can help: I won't go beyond a trip: and you know, says, and sylphs, and elves, and all sorts of genteel little sprites like myself, are allowed to trip upon the grass, even though it be not lighted up by the moon, nor marked with a fairy circle." And she frolicked forwards to some little distance a-head of the carriage, half dancing, and half running.

Lord Mossdale and Ringwood, perceiving that she had

alighted, galloped back to offer their services, but as the former had the start, and was, besides, better mounted, he would have won the prize, had he not waited a few seconds to let his groom take charge of his horse, in which interval Ringwood passed him, slipped from the back of his mare, and had given his arm to Fanny before his competitor had dismounted. The latter, evidently disconcerted, walked on the other side of Fanny, determined at all events that they should not enjoy a *tête-à-tête*; and Lady Susan, who had marked the whole proceeding with a mortification which put her out of humour for the rest of the day, called angrily to Fanny, when they had reached the summit of the ascent, desiring her to return into the carriage, that they might proceed more rapidly, exclaiming in the same breath, "You were mistaken, my Lord; you took her for Augusta, I presume."

"No, indeed," replied Lord Mossdale, dryly, "I never suspected Miss Frampton of jumping so nimbly from the carriage."

Augusta's smile scarcely disguised the bitter feeling at her heart, and Lady Susan, willing to convert the observation into a compliment to her eldest, and a rebuke of her youngest daughter, said, "I don't wonder that your Lordship thought Augusta incapable of such an indecorum: it is a freak that no one but Fanny would think of."

The whole cavalcade now advanced at a quicker pace, and in due time reached one of the wooded heights that surround the circular valley in which the ruins of Beaulieu Abbey are situated. Here it had been preconcerted that they should descend from their carriages and horses, and walk to the abbey; and here, accordingly, here was a new trial of jockeyship, between Lord Mossdale and Ringwood, for the possession of Fanny's arm. Lady Susan, however, being determined not to be thwarted in her dispositions, called the former to the door of the barouche, and requested him to take charge of Augusta; so that all his Lordship's restif designs were frustrated, and he was obliged, in spite of himself, to act as squire to the "tuft-hunter" for the remainder of the day. This he did with a sufficiently bad grace, nor was he conciliated by the deportment of his partner, who, though she could not be otherwise than courteous to a nobleman, was unable to conceal altogether the mortification that preyed upon her spirits, and did not by any means improve the quality of her temper.

Nothing could be more characteristic than the respective demeanour of the two sisters as the party made their way through the beautiful woods of Beaulieu. Augusta, dressed most expensively, and adhering with consummate nicety to the last fiat of fashion, looked as if she had just stepped out of a glass-case, and presented a *tout ensemble* much better adapted to a London drawing-room, than to the wild scenes of the New Forest. In order to display to the best advantage the beauty of her fairy feet, she had compressed them into such small shoes, that she walked slowly, and with visible difficulty; the narrow compass into which her waist was screwed impeded the natural and easy movement of her body as well as of her arms; she had no eyes for the beauty of the scenery around her, or for the distant views that occasionally opened, her whole attention being absorbed in saving her dress from the bushes, or her thin shoes from being soiled, as she won her way with a mincing French step, casting a distasteful look at every object that threatened to derange the exquisite and finished economy of her appointments.

Fanny was attired in a simple though a not inelegant morning-dress, and it was fortunate, as Lady Susan observed, that she wore nothing more costly, for as she tripped nimbly from one spot to another, (she protested against its being called a run,) half wild with exuberant spirits, and thinking of nothing but where the finest views were to be obtained, she twice tore her robe, and had once very nearly lost her shoe, misadventures which only afforded her fresh occasion for laughter. "A thought has come into my head, a serious thought," she gayly exclaimed to Ringwood, "and as that is a rare occurrence, I *must* tell it you. Do you know, that, judging by my own feelings, I imagine there would be much less sorrow and wretchedness in the world, if people were more frequently carried out of themselves by visiting such grand scenes as these, and admiring the beauties of Nature. Look! look! what a noble prospect we get from this little knoll! Yonder is Boldre Church, which, like all those in the forest, is loftily situated, showing its embattled head above a sea of trees. And in this direction we can just get a peep, through the boughs, of Beaulieu Abbey, and the winding river beyond, which as the tide is luckily up, almost assumes the dignity of a lake, uniting itself to the Channel, and nobly terminated in the distance by the Isle of Wight hills. How picturesque are yonder ragged ponies and stunted cows, the

wealth of the poor forest borderers, huddled together upon the tongue of land that shoots out into Souley Ponds! Not that way: look to the left, under the great beech; and in the same direction you may see Crockford Water, and Baddeley. Lud! we mustn't loiter in this manner; we must scamper on—no, that's vulgar: I mean, we must trip on, or we shall lose our company."

"A loss to which I can cheerfully submit," said Ringwood, "so long as I have yours: and really, familiar as I am with its scenery, I wish not to be hurried through this delightful Forest lane."

"Delightful, indeed! though that is too tame a word; for these majestic trees impart a character of grandeur to the scene, standing out, as our green alley narrows or extends, in bold and diversified groupes, which make the foreground as various as are the ever-changing openings into the remoter woods, copses, lawns, glades, heaths, and umbrageous recesses of the Forest.—Ah! I don't like, the deep, hollow, sepulchral sound of that woodman's axe: and hark! there is another, still more distant, tolling the knell of some noble oak or elm. I hope we shall not pass them, for to me, nothing is so melancholy as the sight of a still verdant tree, lying like a prostrate, recently-slain corpse. Look! look! did you see those deer bounding across by yonder tall Italian poplar, that nods and waves like an ostrich-feather in a lady's head? I wonder how this slim foreigner found admittance among our sturdy oaks and elms? There again, is a new opening, still finer than any we have seen: it is like walking along a magnificent gallery of pictures; and such, indeed, they are, all painted by a Divine hand.—Now, don't laugh at me, Mr. Ringwood, for being thrown into such ecstasies. I know Lady Susan and Augusta would; but if you dare to make game of me, I'll send you back all your auriculas, and crumpling apples, and Snowball, besides; so you know what you have to expect!"

Ringwood declared that the flowers and apples were quite safe, as he had never yet found occasion to laugh at her, though he had often enjoyed the happiness of laughing with her; adding, that though the scenery was not new to him, he was scarcely less delighted at its beauty than herself. Thus chatting together, they at length emerged from the woods, and hastening down the valley with more activity than the others had exercised, were enabled to join the rest

of the party just as they were about to enter the ruins of the Abbey. No sooner had they gained the interior of the pile, than Penguin, taking his hammer from his pocket, chipped off a small fragment of the wall, pronouncing, with no small share of geological pomposity, the name of the stone, and the quarry whence it had been probably brought.

"Lord! Mr. P." cried the wife, "who but you would have thought of bringing your hammer upon such an occasion as this?"

"It seems unnecessary, indeed," whispered Lord Mossdale, who sometimes attempted a joke, "for wherever Mr. P. travels, I apprehend he must carry a ninny-hammer with him."

"Nay, now Mossdale! I must partecularly request you won't make me laugh," drawled Captain Frampton, "for it hurts my cracked lip enawmously; does indeed, 'pon my honour!"

"La! and so the monks lived here once, did they?" wheezed Miss Dotterel, whose corpulency little fitted her for pedestrian excursions. "Well, it is a pretty place, now, isn't it? But what a long way from any market; and I wonder what they did about beer, for they could never brew, you know, with the water of Beauley River. Those monks, considering they were all ignorant Papists, *did* know what they were about, for it's a sweet situation, now isn't it? But I shouldn't think meat would keep well in such a damp place, should you, Lady Susan?"

Her Ladyship did not vouchsafe any answer to this interesting inquiry; but Miss Frampton, at the mention of the word "damp," immediately put her hand to her curls, to feel whether they had lost any of their crispness, and looked towards the entrance, as if anxious to retreat.

"I shall not easily forget these ruins," said Ringwood, "for it was here that we killed a fox last year, after the hardest run I ever had in my life."

Lord Mossdale and Captain Frampton were inquiring into the particulars of this chase, when a figure emerged from the farther extremity of the ruins, and had no sooner come into the light so as to be recognised, than Mrs. Penguin, with an affected cry of agitation, exclaimed, "Heavens! it is that odious, horrid, unprincipled Henry Melcomb! What business has the fellow here? He has proved himself to be a skirking poltron; so I do hope, my dear Mr. P., that you

will now show yourself to be a man by kicking him publicly out of the ruins."

"As to kicking, my dear," replied the husband, "that's vulgar; and besides, one might as well have a kicking-match with a young horse. But, as I scorn to be afraid of any man, upon any thing like equal terms, I have no objection to throw my hammer at the cowardly fellow, if all the gentlemen here will agree to stand by me."

"Leave this affair to me," said Captain Frampton, "I have been particuarly anxious to meet this skulking chap, and I am glad I have so public an opportunity of treating him as he deserves; I am, 'pon my honour!" By this time the subject of their conversation had nearly reached them, when the Captain, advancing towards him, continued, "I don't know, Sir, what may be the custom in America, but in this country, when a man applies abusive terms to another, and refuses to give him the satisfaction of a gentleman, we treat him in this manner." As he lifted up his riding-stick in a menacing attitude, Emily Welbeck uttered a cry of terror, closed her eyes, and clung shuddering to her companion. But there was no ground for her apprehensions, for Henry, seizing the uplifted-stick in his left hand, put one foot behind his assailant, and giving him a sudden push at the same time, he fell backwards upon the ground, leaving the stick in the hands of Henry, who broke it, and throwing the pieces behind him, said in a calm but resolute tone, "For your own sake, Captain Frampton, I warn you to refrain from any farther attempts of this nature; for though I keep my temper in tolerable subjection, I cannot always be answerable for it, and I might be provoked to do something which we should both of us have occasion to regret.—Ladies! Miss Welbeck! be not alarmed, I entreat you. I am sorry that self-defence compelled me to this unpleasant proceeding; but there is no injury whatever inflicted upon this prostrate gentleman, who threatened me with chastisement. I have taken care not to hurt him: another time he must take care of himself." With these words, he bowed courteously to the company, and walked out of the ruins, Penguin drawing carefully back behind his companions to let him pass, and neither Lord Mossdale nor any of the other gentlemen betraying the least desire to arrest his retreat.

"I suppose the blackguard learned this ruffianly trick in America," said the Captain, jumping up with more activity

than seemed natural to him, and protesting, in answer to the eager inquiries of his friends, that he was not in the least hurt. "I have held my stick over the fellow's shoulders," he continued, "which is equivalent to a caning."

"Is it?" said Miss Dotterel: "La! what odd ways you gentlemen have! Why, then, the fall he gave you must be equivalent to a kicking. It *was* a bad fall, now, wasn't it? and I'm sure your shoulder must be bruised. Indeed, you had better rub it when you get home with some of your father's opodeldoc; it's a capital thing, for it was only last Friday week, that Giles Patching——"

The interesting episode of Giles Patching was lost to the company and to the world by the loud and opprobrious epithets of "Blackguard! ruffian! Yankee! and ungentelemanly poltron! and cowardly fellow!" showered upon Henry by some of the party, and by none more loudly and bitterly than by Mrs. Penguin; Ringwood, however, frankly declaring, that he thought no gentleman warranted in attempting personally to assault another; and the still trembling Emily Welbeck, feeling in her inmost heart, though she dared not avow it with her lips, perfect approbation of Henry's manliness and forbearance. Some one proposed, that after such an unpleasant occurrence, they should return home, as the ladies might be too much agitated to find any pleasure in prosecuting their excursion: but the Captain scouted this idea as "partecularly prepawsterous," insisting upon their proceeding, and affecting an unusual flow of spirits to conceal the real mortification of his feelings. He was conscious that he had been placed in an humiliating predicament, and could lay no flattering unction to his soul, except reiterating the assertion, that he had done all he intended by flourishing his stick over the fellow's head. Lady Susan, having vented her indignation against Henry in no very measured terms, observed, that it would be derogatory to their own dignity, were they to suffer him to spoil their day's sport; adding, that as he was now as much degraded and dishonoured as he possibly could be, they had better dismiss the young savage altogether from their thoughts, and resolve to enjoy themselves for the remainder of the day, according to their original intentions. Poor Emily Welbeck sighed as she thought how little enjoyment there would be for her; but she could not quit her party, she had no means of conveyance home, and therefore accompanied them with

a heavy heart out of the ruins to an adjacent spot, to which the horses and carriages had been ordered to round, when they all remounted, and skirting Beaulieu River, in the direction of Lyndhurst, proceeded upon their party of pleasure.

CHAPTER X.

I would o'erstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring upon earth,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady.

* * * * *

How many cowards wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk.
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THE upper portion of the river, along the banks of which they were now riding, being swollen by the tide, assumed the appearance of a little lake, surrounded with woods and high grounds, and animated by flocks of gulls, cormorants, and the various sea-fowl that frequent our friths and estuaries; while the surface of the waters below Beaulieu Bridge, and as far as Needsore Point, was studded with fishing-smacks, or other light vessels. As they advanced, however, the river soon dwindled into a sluggish little bull-rush stream, though the forest views before them kept increasing in grandeur and beauty; the ground in one part suddenly falling, and then rising again at a little distance with such abruptness that the quality of the different trees, as they towered amphitheatrically above one another, might be distinctly recognised. Of the foliage, enough remained to fall into tufts from the effects of light and shade, while the yellow leaves of the elm, the orange of the beech, the ochreous tints of the oak, the deep red of the sycamore, and other fading hues, gorgeous as they were, blended softly and harmoniously with the fallen leaves, that imparted to the ground the appearance of rich mosaic work. Exhilarated by the beauty of the scene, and the fineness of the weather, the

party seemed quickly to have forgotten the recent misadventure amid the ruins ; their voices were merry and loud, small jokes occasioned great laughter, and the excursion promised to terminate much more pleasantly than it had begun. As they reached the extremity of the manor of Beauley, they came to the Fighting Cocks, a spot well known to the lurking poacher, and one where, as Lord Mossdale wittily observed, there was no chance of their again encountering the Yankees, at least, if there was to be any sympathy or accordance between the name of the place and its visitants. At this spot the whole party again dismounted, Sam Ostler, of the George, being in attendance to assist the local authorities of the stable in taking charge of the cattle ; an office which he did not discharge without giving offence to Penguin, whose mare's knee he immediately began to inspect and rub, saying, at the same time, " Well ! the hair be grown again I see ; but I say, Muster Penguin, us be close to Lady Cross Lodge here, so you must look sharp not to throw she down again. Wonder you hadn't a'drove into Beauley River as you did into Avonwater-Bottom ! Wauns ! only to think of that there ! But lord ! it baint so strange, a'ter all ; for besides that 'ere sousing at the Miller's-run, you'd very nearly ha' got your ownself chucked right into the horsepond at the fair time ! Heart alive ! how Tony and I did laugh when us heard on't."

" Hold your sauey tongue, fellow !" cried Mrs. Penguin, angrily ; " you forget that you are talking to your betters."

Sam held both his own tongue and the mare's bridle until the geologist and his wife had alighted ; when he whispered to his comrade, " I say, Jerry ! the gray mare's the better horse of that 'ere pair, if 'taint I'm blessed !"

From this spot the whole company, attaching themselves to the same partners as before, proceeded on foot, plunging into the deep woods and wild scenes of the Forest, in the direction of Culverley Heath, but not intending to go farther than Poacher's Lawn, the place where they were to dine, and which was at no great distance from the Fighting Cocks.

Fanny Frampton possessed in an eminent degree that happy faculty, if it may not rather be dignified with the name of a sixth sense, which consists in a peculiar susceptibility to pleasurable impressions from the view of picturesque forms and combinations, whether grand or minute, and which, conferring upon its happy possessor an interest in almost

every object, gives a keener relish to existence, especially amid rural scenes. It was not alone the majesty of woods and waters, "and all the dread magnificence of Heaven," that delighted her; her eye was proportionably gratified in admiring the graceful configuration of the tall fern, with its dark brown, polished stem, the beautiful varieties of the heath, the diversified tints of the moss; from the pale green velvet that paints the trunk of the beech, to the straw-colour of the elm, and the rich brimstone and black with which the oak is stained. Even a deer shed, a keeper's lodge, a pile of bark, a stack of fagots, or a timber-wain drawn by oxen, and heaving slowly up out of the far depths of the forest, or "ponderously ringing down the rough slope," had attractions for her eye; and in a scene such as that through which she was now passing, where all these humbler charms were occasionally combined with the more splendid beauties of Nature, it is needless to state that her enjoyment was keen, to a degree of ecstasy that she had rarely before experienced. So potently was she impressed, that the intensity of delight made her serious, and it was with a tone and look of grave deep feeling, that she ejaculated, "Really, the beauty of these woods is quite affecting, almost overpowering!"

"Excaissively fine! 'pon my honour, Fanny!" drawled the Captain, who had overheard the observation, though it was intended for Ringwood; "but they want more bushes and underwood to afford cover for the game. Haven't seen a single phaisant to-day. Mossdale says half these lumbering trees should be grubbed up and burnt, for they stand too thick either for shooting or hunting."

"Lud! what an idea!" exclaimed Fanny; "I was really becoming quite pensive and sentimental, but the sound of your voice has made me, I fear, as flighty as ever. Well, after all, I feel more at home in my own character of a simpleton, or a giddy girl, whichever you please to call me.—Come! shall we talk nonsense again, and proceed?"

They went forward for some little distance, when their progress was delayed by an impediment from which not even the happy alchemy of Fanny's mind could extract any thing either picturesque or pleasing. It was one of those immense herds of hogs, which in the *pawnage* month, as part of the autumnal season is termed, are frequently encountered in the Forest, but more especially in Bouldrewood-Walk, on account of the profusion of its beech mast. Ringwood ex-

plained to the party, that the forest borderers had a right, at this period, to turn in their hogs, on paying a trifle to the steward's court at Lyndhurst ; and that the swineherd, who generally takes charge of a drove of five or six hundred at once, by feeding them in the first instance to the sound of a horn, could always collect them afterward, and prevent their straying, by means of the same rude music. For the passage of these most inharmonious and unaccommodating wayfarers the whole party stood aside, not without several distateful looks and ejaculations from Miss Frampton, when they resumed their progress, and in a few minutes reached the Poacher's Lawn ; a romantic little opening, skirted with noble trees, through whose vistas there were two or three beautiful views in the direction of Lady Cross Lodge and Culverley Heath.

In this inviting spot, beneath the bows of a beech-tree, such as Tityrus would have loved, the tasteful Tim Wicks had spread out a table, flanked with wooden-forms, and covered with all the delicacies that his larder could supply, his daughter Sally suggest, or crooked Martha the cook fabricate and compound. A handsome booth had been set up to afford shelter in the event of rain, and the landlord's light cart, drawn by old Ball, was in attendance to run over the turf to the public house, should any thing have been omitted that could be supplied from that rural caravansary. The apparent completeness of these arrangements, and above all, the sight of the handsomely covered dinner-table, proved not a little acceptable to a company whose appetites were whetted by exercise ; while the sight of Lord Mosedale and Augusta, approaching arm-in-arm, and chatting together with apparent cordiality, had power for the moment to dissipate some of that disappointment and chagrin which rankled at Lady Susan's heart, though her countenance wore its habitual smile.

"Upon my word, Mr. Wicks," she exclaimed, willing to amuse her friends with his malapropisms ; "you have set us out a much handsomer collation than I expected ; and I hope you will do us the farther favour of officiating as carver ?"

"Oh, my Lady, said the landlord, bustling, and bowing, and scraping to every individual that came up ; "you are very good ; but you must recollect that you are not at the George, where one has the whole trigonometry of the dinner service, all within the segment of a circle, and if you want

any thing, you may pop right, slap-bang, point-blank, down upon the fulcrum, as a body may say.—Tony! take off Squire Ringwood's spurs!—As to feasts, my Lady, we have nothing better than luncheons in our times—nothing like Belshazzar's feast, or Antony and Cleopatra's, and such like. Prime jobs those! Wonder how much they would stand a-head in our days?"

"I perceive you are read both in sacred and profane literature," said Lady Susan.

"Profane!" ejaculated Tim, with a demure, not to say horrified look; "I can assure your Ladyship that I never read any thing profane in my whole life. No inverse ratio nor comic sections about Tim Wicks; all rectilinear. When I can't go to church, I read every Sunday the Lethargy of the Church of England, as every man ought to do, who is a friend to the glorious Revolution effected by Martin Lutherbourg.—Any Gemman or Lady like pigeon-pie? 'cause if they do, let them try this: crooked Martha's a perfect paradox at pigeon-pies—quite a polygon of a cook!—Tony! bring lobster-sallad!—Sarvant, Mr. Penguin; got some syllabubs for you, made by Sally's own hand. Never come to the George now, Sir. Haven't seen you since the fair. Lord! only to think of their taking you for a thief!—Capital fair, Sir, a'ter all; took eight pounds from the first crowd that collected; the *primum mobile*, as I called it; neither chalk nor score, but all hard money, right, slap-bang, point-blank, down upon the fulcrum!"

"All right, all right," said Penguin; "and you found time, I believe, to see some of the sports of the fair, notwithstanding."

"Yes, Sir; saw all the wild beasts, the quadrupeds, and parallelo-bipeds, that show you the whole trigonometry of Nature in one diameter. But the conjurer, Sir; wasn't he a regular rhomboid of a fellow? Hey! presto, pass! and he would transmogrify you a flat parallelogram into an atmospheric body, afore you could say Jack Robinson! Many things he did, I could have sworn was a moral impossible, and I felt so frustrated, that I am sure you might have knocked me down with a capillary tube. Then the ventri-loquist! did you ever hear such a chap as that? Couldn't believe my own ears; thought it must be an optical delusion.—Tony! you'll never draw that cork. Keep your diagonal line perpendicular. Can't you proportion your velocity to

the pressure, so as to let the axis revolve on its own impetus. D'ye catch the focus, hey?—Pop! There! that comes of treating the matter mathematically, and according to a pacific proposition."

"He were such a rum customer," said Tony, turning the cork round and examining it, instead of pouring out the wine.

"We've no rum customers here," said his master, "and so I brought none with me, though I have some rare old Jamaica at the George.—Ladies and Gentlemen, you will excuse Tony, he only spoke in a metaphor."

"Sure enough, such a cork I never met afore, nor no one else!" cried Tony, at length beginning to pour out the wine.

"Dear heart, Miss!" ejaculated Wicks, addressing himself to Emily, "not a word has come out of your mouth, nor a morsel gone into it, all this time. Won't you take this wing of a chicken?—well, then, you must positively take some tongue, for you seem to want that, at all events. Beg pardon, hope no offence, but every body knows Tim Wicks is a little bit of a wag."

Poor Emily, who had no spirits either for talking or eating, was the only silent and inactive person in the whole party. The forest scenes had recalled to her mind still more vividly her occasional meetings with her unfortunate brother; the alarming occurrence in the ruins of Beauley Abbey had agitated her nerves; and it saddened her whole soul to reflect, that while her nearest and dearest relatives were alienated from each other, and suffering under afflictions different in their origin, though similar in the keen distress they respectively occasioned, she herself had bestowed her heart, a fact she could no longer conceal, upon one who was not only indignantly rejected by her father, but seemed to be an object of misrepresentation and opprobrium to nearly the whole vicinity.

Both Fanny and Miss Dotterel kindly tried to rouse her from her melancholy, but both forbore when they saw that it rather distressed her to have her depression noticed. So far from being infected by her sadness, the others indulged freely in the exhilaration and loud merriment which the Beautiful scenery, fine weather, and the social excitement of the board, were so well calculated to inspire; and when they had concluded their gay repast, they all agreed to pro-

ceeded to a spot beyond a clump of trees in front of them, from which was to be obtained a finer view of Lady Cross Woods, and a glimpse over the extensive heath between Beauley and Lymington Rivers. The place indicated formed a running knoll or tufted bank, hanging over a little shrubby dell on the opposite side of the Poacher's Lawn, and to this point the party proceeded, laughing and chatting, and little dreaming of the unwelcome objects they were approaching.

From the bustle of preparation at the George-inn, and the talk of the loquacious landlord, Henry had learned the whole plan of Lady Susan's party, as well as that Emily was to join it, and resolved, with the true feelings of a lover, to hover around the company in the Forest, anticipating the pleasure of seeing his mistress at all events, and not without a vague expectation that some happy chance might afford him an opportunity of conversing with her, especially as she was to be unaccompanied by her father. It was rather, however, a desire to see the ruins, than any thought of waiting there for Emily, that had carried him to Beauley Abbey, where he understood the company were not to arrive until an hour later, and whence he meant to proceed before there should be any chance of his meeting them. This mistake or misinformation as to time, had occasioned his rencounter with Captain Frampton, immediately after which, he hurried towards Beauley Woods, crossed the Poacher's Lawn, and climbing one of the tall trees that overhung the tufted bank we have been describing, had, from his ensconced perch amid the leaves, enjoyed the satisfaction of contemplating Emily during the whole time of the repast. That this was a freak little consonant with his philosophical habits, or with the character of one who had not much romance in his composition, and who studied usefulness in all his pursuits, we readily coincide; but Henry had, at least, the excuse of Benedick, when he called himself a "utilitarian," he did not know that he should ever live to be in love.

We have said that the company, in their advance towards the knoll, were approaching more than one unwelcome object. Henry, after what had lately occurred, might be deemed entitled to this appellation; but the more appalling spectacle wherewith they were to be scared, although not entirely without precedent, even in our own country, was of a nature so singularly strange and marvellous, that we must

proceeded to account for it, before we venture to record its appearance. One of the large caravans of wild beasts which had been exhibited at Thaxted fair, after having travelled into Dorsetshire, was returning across the New Forest towards Southampton, when it was accidentally overturned near Culverley. It contained a lion and lioness, separated at the time from one another by a moveable grated division. The door of one of the dens was forced open by the fall, the lion leaped out, and escaped in the direction of Beaulley Woods, ranging here and there at full speed in the joy of his recovered liberty, until he came to the tufted bank near the Poacher's Lawn, when he stretched himself luxuriously beneath it, for the purpose of taking breath, and enjoying a little rest. Both these objects threatening to be defeated by the noisy merriment of Lady Susan's gay party as it approached, the animal vaulted over the intervening bushes, and uttering a loud roar, descended upon the bank, only a few yards in advance of the assemblage.

The piercing shrieks, the agony of terror, and the tumultuous rush of flight that instantaneously ensued, must be left to the imagination, for they cannot be described. Henry, who had witnessed the occurrence, urged by a sudden impulse to offer himself to the rage of the wild beast, and thus, perhaps, be the means of saving Emily and others of his fellow-creatures from destruction, dropped in a second from bough to bough, and alighted upon the grass almost within reach of the lion, shouting aloud to the fugitives, "To the cart! to the cart! Save Emily Welbeck! Save the ladies!" Ere the words had escaped his lips, they to whom they were addressed had all disappeared amid the trees, with the exception of Emily, who having been deserted by her companion, Captain Frampton, had staggered a short way, and then fallen fainting upon the grass. Henry recognised her as she sunk to the earth, and the recollection that she was completely in the power of the terrible animal before him, determined him to oppose its progress, or rather, for he was totally unarmed, to give himself up as a sacrifice, in the hope that she might in the mean time recover, and effect her escape. Hopeless as was the struggle with such an adversary, it was not in his valorous nature to fall an unresisting prey; he knew that he possessed great muscular power, and he resolved to lose no chance of preserving his own life that might be compatible with the safety of Emily. That he

should contemplate the probable result of such an unequal and terrific contest without a thrill of horror in his senses, and a sudden appalment of his spirit, it is not meant to assert; for no man can confront a sudden, unexpected, and frightful death, without some human shuddering; but he faltered not in his firm resolution, he steeled his heart as well as he could against the natural abhorrence that made it throb violently in his bosom, and having placed himself in the position which he thought best calculated to hide Emily, he awaited the assault of his terrible antagonist.

When Henry had first dropped from the tree, the lion, startled at such an unexpected apparition, had drawn back two or three paces, pointing his ears, gently waving his tail, and eyeing him with a fixed attention, in which position and attitude he still remained, without indicating any hostile intentions. Henry, on the other hand, surveyed the beast with a transfixed, intent gaze, during which thrilling survey he recognised him for the individual lion which he had seen exhibited at Thaxted fair. On that occasion his keeper had gone into his den, rubbed his forehead, and wrestled with him, loudly vaunting, however, that if any other man in England should be rash enough to attempt the same liberty, he would be instantly torn in pieces. From the present quietness of the animal, and the absence of all ferocity in the expression of its grave-looking, earnest features, Henry believed it to be much more tame than it had been represented; and having heard that it was the generous nature of this beast to respect those who, instead of betraying fear and flying, met it with boldness and confidence, he resolved upon the perilous experiment of advancing towards the formidable quadruped, and rubbing its forehead, as he had seen done by the keeper. For this purpose he walked forwards with a firm step and an undaunted mien, the animal remaining all the time in the same posture as before, and receiving with perfect quietness, and an evident complacency, the rude sort of greeting to which it had been accustomed. At this moment Henry's heart fairly leaped in his bosom, for he felt electrified with a sudden hope of life and safety to himself, to Emily, and to her companions.

Fresh apprehensions, however, shot through his bosom, when the lion, thinking, probably, that it was to go through the whole exhibition to which it had been habituated, reared itself upon its hind legs, rested its huge paws upon Henry's

shoulders, and looked down upon him with its large black bright eyes, opening at the same time its mouth, and displaying its white fangs and cavernous gorge. In this appalling crisis, Henry felt that his only course was to imitate the actions of the keeper, whom he had seen in this way walk round the cage, and he accordingly took several steps backwards, purposely retreating in such a direction that they lost sight of Emily by the intervention of some trees, when his adversary voluntarily dropping his paws upon the ground, he again began to propitiate him by rubbing his forehead. In this manner, for the same operation was repeated several times, he contrived gradually to decoy his four-footed companion along the edge of the bank, until they were at some distance from the spot where he had first appeared. During this process, his courage and confidence kept continually increasing, but still he felt utterly at a loss what course to adopt, or how to effect his escape. At times, he looked around him for a convenient tree up which he might attempt to spring, meaning again to descend and intercept the animal should it bend its course toward Emily; but in the contrary event, to seek her himself, and remove her to some place of safety. No such mode of escape immediately occurring, he tried to withdraw himself, so as to avoid any appearance of flight, hoping that the lion, satisfied with the wrestling match they had had together, might allow him to take his leave. But in this expectation he found himself completely mistaken, the animal invariably cutting off his retreat, with an evident determination not to lose sight of him, though without any immediate manifestation of hostile intentions. This alarming resolution proved not a little discouraging to his prisoner, who began now to apprehend that he was pretty much in the predicament of the mouse, around which the cat gambols and makes all sorts of amicable manifestations, until it thinks proper, when it becomes weary of its capricious clemency, to destroy and devour its victim.

It was with a proportionate satisfaction, therefore, that he saw a prospect of deliverance approaching from a quarter whence he had little anticipated it. The peasants of Culverley, although they had willingly assisted in setting up the overturned caravan, could not be persuaded by the keeper to assist him in the recovery of the truant lion, in spite of his asseverations that the animal was perfectly tame. Some of

them had heard him affirm the contrary at Thaxted Fair, and as both averments could not be true, they chose to credit that which afforded them a valid excuse for declining any interference in so perilous an affair. Hodge Nettletop, however, who happened to be passing at the time, and who was naturally an obliging and stout-hearted fellow, offered his own services, as well as those of Farmer Patching's stanch bulldog, which accompanied him, an overture which was gladly accepted. The caravan was accordingly driven into the Forest, in the direction the runaway had taken, Hodge acting as guide through the turfy avenues and rude roads with which Beauley Woods were pierced, until they approached the little shrubby dell and tufted bank whence the lion had burst upon the astounded party. His roar guiding his pursuers to the spot, they skirted the dell, and came in sight of the object they were seeking, just as Henry began to be visited by those unpleasant misgivings as to his ultimate fate, which we have stated. It was Hodge's first impulse, at sight of the monster, to seek safety by climbing up a tree; but he had no sooner ascertained that the individual, whom the animal seemed to have taken prisoner, was Henry Melcomb, his benefactor, his liberator, the preserver of his Lucy, than he abandoned every thought of flight, determined at all risks to effect his deliverance, if it were possible.

It was destined that this most critical moment should afford a striking illustration of the old adage, that an injudicious ally is more dangerous than an enemy; for the bulldog, one of the most ferocious of the breed, flew fiercely towards the lion, baying loudly, as if meditating an attack. Thus menaced, the noble and hitherto quiet animal began to awaken its dormant energies, and to clothe itself in its terrors; its mane shook, its eyes glared, and a low angry growl seemed to anticipate an outbursting of fury that might be fatal to all within its reach. Henry, who instantly marked its chafing mood, and foresaw the danger with which it was fraught, shouted loudly to Hodge, desiring him to call off the dog. This he had repeatedly attempted, but the eager animal would not obey his voice, and the consequences would probably have been of the most frightful nature, had not Hodge, by a heavy and well-directed stone, succeeded in laying the barking assailant stunned and sprawling upon the turf.

Meanwhile, the keeper had let down the wooden side of his caravan; the lioness, who instantly saw and recognised

her mate, made a loud whining noise, at which the lion turned sharply round, replied by a similar note of gratulation, jumped from the bank, vaulted lightly over the intervening shrubs, and leaping back into his proper cage, the door of which had been invitingly left open for his reception, was secured without the smallest injury to any one.

It were needless to describe Henry's feelings at his sudden and safe extrication from a jeopardy so fearful. He himself neither stayed to analyze them, nor to thank Hodge for his bold and timely assistance, but rushed back to the spot where he had seen Emily sink fainting upon the turf. She was no longer visible. He ran to the Poacher's Lawn, where the dinner table, with the fragments of the collation, remained *in statu quo*, but neither guests nor attendants were to be seen. As the light cart had also disappeared, he concluded that it had been used to convey the fugitives to the Fighting Cocks, as the nearest place of safety. Thither he accordingly proceeded, when he learnt from Tony that Squire Ringwood, having run back and thrown Miss Welbeck over his shoulder, a job which belonged by rights to Captain Frampton, who had charge of her, but which he had thought proper to decline, the ladies had been huddled into the cart, and the whole party had quickly found their way to the inn. He added, that they were then up stairs, endeavouring to recover from their alarm, though some of the females, especially Miss Welbeck, still remained exceedingly ill from the effects of terror.

Much as he wished to relieve the apprehension of the latter, Henry's pride would not allow him to obtrude himself upon the others, and he therefore sent a polite message by Tony, informing the company that he himself was safe and uninjured, that the lion had been secured in its caravan, that they might therefore return home, whenever it suited them, in perfect security, and that he trusted the ladies would dismiss every feeling of alarm, and experience no farther ill-effects from the agitation they had undergone. At the instance of Tony, he took some refreshment, of which after all his exertions he stood in no small need, and then striking across the country, made his way back to the George at Thaxted.

His disordered and heated appearance, for his bodily exertions and perturbation of mind had thrown him into a profuse perspiration, together with the defiled state of his clothes, on which the lion had left the marks of his muddy paws, soon

revealed to Mrs. Tenby that something extraordinary had happened, and she had no sooner learnt the particulars of Henry's escape, than lifting up her hands and eyes with an amazement that even predominated over her anger, she exclaimed, "The old one! Surely, surely you must be poking fun at me! What! you don't mean to say that you dropped from the tree on purpose, and gave yourself up to a great, savage, teejus crittur, that could have scalped you, and turned you inside out in half a minute! Well, that beats all natur! And what for? Why, for your worst enemies, every one of whom has been vilifying and telling lies of you, and running you down, as if you were a Mohawk or a Nigger. Did you ever think of that?"

"I thought of nothing: I acted upon the impulse of the moment; but if I had had time to reflect, it would not have made the smallest difference in my conduct, for I know not a pleasanter way of destroying my enemies than by turning them into friends. Besides, Ringwood and Emily Welbeck were of the party."

"And what are they? what can they ever be to you? Guess your own skin is nearer to you than another man's jacket. You're talking 'tarnal nonsense, Henry, 'twouldn't be you if 'tw'ant, and you act for all the world just like an addle-headed gump. My poor, dear, brave boy!" continued Mrs. Tenby, laying her hand upon his shoulder, as her wrath gave way to a feeling of compassionate contempt. "You're not fit to go alone; you ain't, indeed: for as if 'twere not enough to let others bamboozle you, you make a cat's-paw of your own self. Come, boy, change your coat, and let's get a snack o' dinner, for you must be pretty considerably famished, I reckon."

CHAPTER XI.

It was the observation of a great philosopher, that the moment the world should see a perfect police, the moment there should be no contraband trade, that moment it would become quite impossible to write a good romance, for that then nothing would occur in real life which might, with any moderate degree of ornament, be formed into the ground-work of a fiction. SCHLEGEL'S LECTURES.

HENRY's intrepid conduct in this affair, which was largely bruited abroad by Hodge Nettletop, not without several marvellous additament, and widely circulated by Ringwood and Fanny Frampton, with a stricter attention to veracity, though with a not less ardent admiration, occasioned a considerable change of public opinion in the vicinity of Thaxted, especially when contrasted with Captain Frampton's ungallant desertion of Emily in the hour of danger, and his refusal to return and extricate her from the perilous predicament in which she had been left. It was now equally obvious that Henry possessed an undaunted, a romantic courage, when any fitting occasion called for its display; and that the Captain, however he might screw himself up to that conventional valour which springs from the fear of being thought a coward, had no stock of natural intrepidity to answer the call of any sudden and startling emergency. His former misbehaviour to Lucy, combined with his want of proper spirit and gallantry upon the present occasion, rendered him so exceedingly unpopular with the commonalty, that he was exposed to many taunts and annoyances; while, as his character sunk in public estimation, that of Henry, finding more numerous and earnest defenders, became every day cleared from some of the unmerited obloquies that had been cast upon it. He himself, in the mean time, pursued the even tenor of his way, content with the consciousness of his own innocence, and only solicitous, through good or ill report, to benefit his fellow-creatures in every possible manner that his limited means would allow.

Such, however, was his unlucky fate, that this gleam of returning popularity was destined to be obscured by an occurrence in which, though again free from blame, he was a second

time exposed to the villifying charges of his maligners. It will be recollected that Mrs. Penguin, previously to the shameless declaration of her passion, had prevailed upon him to become security for one whom she had represented as a relation, suffering under temporary embarrassment. This she had done, not only to secure beforehand a means of revenge upon Henry, should he reject her overtures, as she had some reason to anticipate, but to effect the liberation of the paramour who had first seduced her from the paths of virtue, and who was at that moment lying in prison for debt. It was for this man, and not for any relation, as she pretended, that she had devised her insidious scheme, which had so far answered, that her friend had been set free, and her enemy, for such she now considered Henry, was destined, if she could succeed in her machinations, to supply his place within the walls of a prison. An application had been made to him for payment of the bond, his immediate inability to discharge which he had frankly stated, and referred the parties to Mrs. Penguin, writing to that lady to remind her of the pledge she had given at the time of his contracting the obligation. So far from attending to this appeal, she revived the story of Henry's independent circumstances, which had first induced the creditor to accept his security, urging the prompt enforcement of the bond as a certain means of obtaining the money. Acting upon these instances and misrepresentations, the claimant gave orders for his immediate arrest, which was publicly executed by two bailiffs at the George Inn, a few days after the adventure in the Forest, and during the temporary absence of Mrs. Tenby.

The officers having business to transact at Lyndhurst, offered to convey their prisoner thither in a chaise-cart, or on foot, whichever he might prefer. As he invariably chose to walk, whenever an option was afforded him, he decided for that mode of proceeding, and accordingly quitted Thaxted in the custody of the bailiffs, leaving several groupes of its inhabitants and their gossiping neighbours earnestly discussing this strange occurrence, and most of them prepared—so soon do we think harshly of the unfortunate—to renounce their recent and favourable opinions of Henry, and to recall and credit the rumours of his being a needy fortune-hunter and adventurer. The prisoner, in the meanwhile, went forward at a brisk pace, with his companions, vexed at Mrs. Penguin's ungenerous conduct, rather than dismayed.

at his own misfortune, and endeavouring to prove, by logical deduction, the folly of expecting that a man immured in a prison should be better enabled to discharge a debt, than when, by enjoying his liberty, he has the means of exerting his talents, of collecting his resources, and of consulting his friends. These arguments produced very little effect upon his auditors, who being perfectly satisfied with the present state of the law, did not think it necessary to enter more learnedly into the discussion, than by the occasional interjection of the words, "Blarney!" and "Gammon!"

In this manner they proceeded until they reached a heathy common in the vicinity of Brackenhurst, when they perceived a whiskey approaching with two men, being the only travellers they had yet encountered. Not having any reason to be particularly proud of the fellows with whom he was trudging arm-in-arm, and whose looks and dress, as well as their formidable bludgeons, sufficiently attested their occupation, Henry, with a natural feeling of shame, averted his face as the chaise approached; but he was recognised, notwithstanding, by the Captain of the smugglers, and his friend Rough-and-ready, who were riding within it. The former happening to know one of the bailiffs by sight, immediately perceived, by their order of march, that they were conveying Henry as their prisoner to some place of security, and instantly determined to effect his rescue. From his natural antipathy to land-sharks and pirates he would willingly have lent a hand to liberate even a stranger from their clutches; but when he saw within their grasp the man who had saved the life of his daughter and of his comrade George, a deep feeling of gratitude aggravated his hatred of the officers into a sudden and ungovernable fury. Generally speaking, he was not liable to any access of passion, nor prone to unnecessary violence; considering his lawless calling, he might, indeed, be pronounced a peaceable man; but in the present instance he could lay little claim, either by his actions or appearance, to any such character. His inflamed visage, his large compressed mouth, his sparkling, lion-like eyes, and the firm resolution which braced every muscle of his broad athletic frame, imparted something terrible to his appearance, as he threw aside his meerschaum-pipe, grasped a cudgel as if he would crush it in his hand, and leaping out of the chaise, called upon Rough-and-ready to follow him, shouting out to the officers as he approached,

"Avast! heave off! shoot a-head! 'bout ship and luff! ye lubberly sharks! Start my timbers! d'ye think I'll stand by and see young Mr. Melcomb grappled and carried into limbo while I've a leg or an arm left? Cast off your towing-rope and scud, for if ye let me once run ye aboard, curse me if I shall show ye much quarter!"

The bailiffs, who were able-bodied and stout-hearted men, too much accustomed to brawls and skirmishes to be easily intimidated, brandished their heavy bludgeons, swearing that they would never surrender their prisoner, and denouncing the pains and penalties of the law against those who should violently attempt a rescue. Henry, too, implored his friends to desist from their rash design; but the Captain and his sturdy companion, who were in no cue for listening to dissuasions, or attending to any thing but the impulse of their feelings, instantly commenced a furious assault. The officers defended themselves with great resolution, and Henry, instead of attending to the Captain's shouts, that he should make his escape, now that the pirates had relinquished their hold of him, threw himself between the combatants with the hope of parting them. In this friendly but most perilous office he received an unintended blow from one of the bailiffs, which prostrated him upon the ground in a state of temporary insensibility. His assailant was himself felled to the earth immediately afterward; his comrade, seeing that he had no chance of final success against such desperate antagonists, took to his heels; the Captain, assisted by his brother smuggler, lifted Henry into the whiskey, jumped in after him, whistled to the black mare, which set off instantly at a full gallop, and thus, in an incredibly short space of time from the commencement of this most unexpected affair, was Henry, in spite of himself forcibly rescued, and conveyed to the Grange-farm, the haunt of the smugglers, with which our readers are already well acquainted.

As we have, however, been so long separated from its inmates, we must cast a brief retrospective glance at their proceedings, before we continue our narrative. In the last conversation we recorded between Gentleman George, as the smugglers called him, and Mary Boulderson, the former had avowed his determination of quitting the free-trade for ever, of immediately leaving the Grange-farm, notwithstanding his broken leg, and of taking up his abode in a sequestered cottage of the Forest. This resolution he communicated to the

Captain on the following morning, expressing a hope that he himself would so far consult the happiness of his daughter, as to abandon a mode of life to which she was so vehemently opposed.

"Opposed!" exclaimed the Captain; "more fool she! Haven't I made a comfortable, honest fortune by it, and won't she have every shilling? Leave it off! Well, so I will leave it off, and unship rudder, when I've run the Longsplice's cargo, but not afore;—cause why?—I've sworn to have that ashore, and I won't tell a lie, no, not even for Polly! But why must you quit the Grange, and go and live in a wood-cutter's cabin in the forest, for all the world just like Robinson Crusoe? Lookye here, George; I don't pretend to see into a mill-stone farther than other folks, but I've taken a notion into my head that you've got a sneaking kindness for my Polly, and if I can read any thing of the compass, and baint strangely out in my reckoning, she'd have no objection to be spliced to you. Now, mayhap you may be thinking, that 'cause I've got my lockers pretty well stored, I'm looking higher for Polly—for some one that was never in the free-trade, and has always been what the world calls a respectable chap—but I tell you what, George, if you think any thing of that sort, you think a lie."

"Whatever may have been my wishes," said George, much agitated, "I have never dared to express any thoughts that way; I have never—"

"Clew up your jawing-tackle, and listen to me," interposed the Captain. "I never asked you where you came from, nor who you are;—'cause why?—I know *what* you are. Know that you are a brave, generous fellow; and got that 'ere bit o' lead put in you, when by good-right I ought to have it! Dare say you've had misfortuns, but there's many a good ship runs out of the right course at first, and yet comes safe into port at last. However, I hate palavering, and so to come to the upshot, if you like Polly, and Polly likes you, which according to my reckoning is a pretty sure card, why take her, George, take her; and as good and as brave-hearted a girl she is as any in all Hampshire, though she's no better than the daughter of Lawrence Boulderson. I arn't ashamed of my right name, you see, though they may call me by half-a-dozen others, Lion, and Blacklocks, and the Capt'n, and what not;—but mind, I don't ask you what yours is."

George was about to speak, when his companion, lifting up his hand, continued, "Avast! batten down your mouth-hatch, and hear me out, for I han't done yet. If we both quit the free-trade, a'ter we've run the Longsplice, and you marry my Polly, I've got quite enough to take care of us all till you can get into some other birth, if you don't like to be idle; and when I'm popped under ground in my last hammock, there'll be plenty to victual you and yours for the whole voyage of life; for I've got nobody to care for but Polly and you, and every shilling shall go into your lockers."

This prospect of a happiness which he at once ardently desired, and feared to be unattainable, as well as the generous nature of the proposition, so deeply affected George's spirit, softened as it was by long anxiety and personal suffering, that in the attempt to speak he burst into tears, and could only express his emotion by repeatedly grasping the Captain's hand. Apologizing for this weakness, which he attributed to his reduced state, he declared, that to explain the circumstances which made it impossible for him to accept this gratifying offer, he must divulge the secret of who and what he was; a secret which he could no longer withhold from so sincere and generous a friend, though, as it deeply involved his own personal safety, as well as that of another, he had hitherto kept it locked in his own bosom, and must even now exact a pledge that it should never be repeated. This being willingly given, George continued—"As so few of our brotherhood pass by their real names, you will be little surprised to hear that mine is not George, though you can hardly be prepared for the strange avowal that my real appellation is Godfrey Welbeck, and that I am the only son of Gideon Welbeck of the Manor-house,—that son of whose vices, follies, and crimes, you have doubtless heard; that unfortunate son who has been formally disinherited and cursed by his father! Of my vices and follies I make a free confession: but, thank God! I am not responsible for any crimes, unless my engaging in the free-trade may subject me to that imputation."

"Fudge!" interposed the Captain. "What crimes can we commit, since we touch no man's property but the King's and never attack any one but the rascally preventive men?"

"The profligate companions," resumed Godfrey, (for so we shall henceforward call him,) "who, in the belief that I was heir to a large fortune, hovered around me like so many

harpies, and had engaged me in extensive bill transactions, no sooner found that my resources were utterly exhausted, than they trumped up a charge of forgery against me, well knowing it to be utterly unfounded, but hoping that my father would pay whatever they might choose to extort, rather than have his name dishonoured, and see his son exposed to so infamous an imputation. But they were baffled: my father would not be any farther plundered; and I have every reason to believe, by recent letters from my agent in London, that the villains, who actually procured a warrant for my apprehension upon this false charge of forgery, will be exposed to shame, convicted of perjury, and severely punished for their conspiracy."

"Start my timbers! and was it for nothing more than this that Justice Welbeck disinherited and cursed you, and turned you adrift?"

"Alas! my offences have been accumulating for years; but that which finally irritated him beyond all hope of reconciliation, and drove him to this dreadful anathema, was undoubtedly the charge of felony, coupled as it was with my degradation and most unfortunate marriage."

"Marriage! Whew!" whistled the Captain; "Are you married? Shiver the Longsplice! how came you to keep it such a secret? That warn't fair and aboveboard, George; and now I think on't, didn't I hear something of your meeting a wench in the Forest? That was your wife, I s'pose."

"No, indeed, that was my sister, my dear and generous Emily, who, in spite of all my misdeeds, has still continued my friend and counsellor. I have often made appointments to meet her in the recesses of Boldre-wood Walk; but as she was threatened with the same rejection and malediction as myself if she ever maintained any correspondence with me, our interviews were of course kept a profound secret from all. She believes that I have been living concealed in a distant cottage; for not even to Emily did I reveal the fact of my being engaged with you in the free-trade, lest I should be adding farther distress to a mind which was already too much oppressed with sorrow."

"Lord! is the girl so squeamish as all that? Well, and what put it into your head to come and join us, and never to say a word about your being spliced?"

Godfrey here detailed how an abandoned woman had been pamed off upon him as a person of respectability, and

related the misery she had quickly entailed upon him in various ways ; to escape from which, from his own debts as well as hers, and from the threatened criminal indictment, he had, in a moment of desperation, quitted London, and joined the Captain, not only for the purpose of being near Emily, his only remaining friend, but from his persuasion that some of the numerous places of concealment known to the smugglers, would afford him a secure retreat, until, by the mediation of his sister, he might effect some arrangement of his affairs. All this was perfectly true, but not the whole truth. Had the narrator been conversant with his own character, he might have added, that notwithstanding his acquirements, he was of weak and pliable mind, prone to act upon impulse, habitually indiscreet and unreflecting, not without a certain dash of romance, or rather of wildness, in his temperament. Upon a former occasion he had seen and admired Mary, and the hope of being beneath the same roof with her had exercised no inconsiderable influence upon his decision. With his usual levity of mind he had never reflected to what this intimacy might lead, had never considered the folly, the unjustifiableness of kindling a reciprocal attachment, which, in his present circumstances, could not be brought to any satisfactory result. Hence his embarrassment, his remorse, his vacillation, his inconsistency, his mysterious language and conduct, when he found that this mutual regard had actually been engendered, and yet wanted resolution to explain the dilemma in which he was placed, or to withdraw himself from its influence. The fear of compromising Emily with her father, by any disclosure of their interview, prevented him from satisfying Mary as to the suspicious meeting in the Forest ; while he dreaded to make the confession of his marriage, lest she should attach herself to some other, and thus destroy all hope of his ever possessing the object of his affections.

That there was such a hope, and that too neither a remote nor an unreasonable one, he now stated to the Captain, since he had ascertained that the woman had been married to him under a false name, and had discovered other informalities in their hasty nuptials. His proctor assured him that he would be successful in the dissolution of marriage for which he was then suing, in which event Godfrey declared, that if the Captain retained his generous purposes after hearing his unfortunate story, nothing would delight him more than to accept

his offer, and to dedicate the remainder of his life to the happiness of Mary, trusting, as he did, that the bitter experience he had earned would henceforward secure him from all recurrence of his past follies and misdeeds.

"Stick to what I said?" cried the Captain in a somewhat indignant tone; "to be sure I will,—when did you ever know Larry Boulderson tell a lie? There's my fist, George, and that's as good as e'er a bond in all Europe. As to your running among the shoals and breakers, and having your rudder unshipped, and your sheathing beat off, why that may happen to any young pilot that doesn't keep a sharp look-out; but he must be a precious lubber indeed, if he runs his boat a second time upon the same reef. But I say, George, if you cut clear of this spitfire rover that is grappled to your side, and marry my Polly, mayhap the old justice mayn't like your second wife any more than he did the first?"

"I would omit no means of being reconciled to my father, but I know that it is utterly hopeless. He is a stern, inexorable man, and where he has once conceived a disgust it is not only immovable, but inveterate. I believe that the mere sight of me, dearly as he once loved me, would now almost irritate him to madness. I cannot complain, I am rightly punished for my follies; I am disgraced, a pauper, and fatherless."

"Start my timbers, George, what cursed nonsense you're talking. If you trounce these sharks in London, and cut clear of your brimstone fireship of a wife, you're not disgraced. A pauper you shall never be while I've got a shot in the locker; and if you and Polly come together, you shall have Larry Boulderson for your father; so you see, you're three whole points wrong in your reckoning. Avast now! will ye? What are you thanking me for, when it's I that ought to thank you for coming more than once into fire to cover my carcass? I never did thank you, though—'cause why?—I hate jawing and snivelling, and all that sort of thing; so cheer up, George, toss off this cordial, and let's talk no more now, for I see it only makes you pipe your eye, which is all Betty Martin."

After this conversation the Captain no longer opposed Godfrey's immediate departure from the Grange-farm, conscious that upon Mary's account, as well as his own, it was much better they should be separated until the result of the pending suit should be ascertained. It was agreed to leave

Mary under the impression that their separation was a final one, in order that she might thus be gradually weaning herself from an attachment, which a failure in gaining his cause would ultimately compel her to conquer; and for the same reason no intimation was given her of Godfrey's real history. From time to time, the Captain went over to his retreat in the Forest, to afford him society, to attend to his recovery, to consult with him, and to supply the means for prosecuting his suits in London, both of which presented every appearance of a successful issue. Mary, in the meanwhile, was a prey to feelings which she would not confess, but which sufficiently betrayed themselves in her altered looks. Her proud and honourable spirit prompted her to scorn the equivocating conduct of the man who could lay himself out to gain her affections, for such was her construction of George's behaviour, and who, at the same time, by his unexplained meeting in the Forest, appeared to be engaged in a love affair with some other woman; while the mystery which involved his name and his fate, at once stimulated her curiosity, and added to her regret that he should have withdrawn himself without coming to an *éclaircissement*. That he was really attached to her she could hardly doubt, but this only rendering his indecision and ambiguity the more unmanly, she spoke of him at times with the bitterness and scorn which such conduct might well seem to warrant. Not even the wounded pride, however, which prompted these animadversions, could expel him from her heart, and the conflict of her feelings was, as we have already intimated, sufficiently apparent in her saddened looks.

Such was the state of affairs at the Grange-farm, when Henry, still insensible from the dreadful contusion he had received upon the head, was lifted out of the whiskey, and carried into the house. As there was too much reason to apprehend that an immediate hue and cry would be raised, and search-warrants be issued, the Captain thought it prudent to convey him at once into their retreat store, a place of security which had hitherto baffled every attempt to discover it. There was a spare kitchen in the farm, the grate of which, with the whole iron back of the chimney, being made to turn upon a pivot, afforded an entrance to the ancient vaults, which had probably been excavated in the monkish times. When a visit was expected, this fire was always lighted, and the cook went busily to work, so that it was impos-

sible to suspect that the grate was applied to any other than culinary purposes; nor, had a doubt been engendered, would the heat and the smoke have allowed any very strict scrutiny.

It would be difficult to describe Henry's surprise, when, upon recovering his faculties, he found himself lying on a couch, in a large vault, dimly lighted with candles, and confusedly lumbered with tubs and dry goods, and stores of all sorts, while Mary was applying an embrocation to the contusion on his head, the Captain looking earnestly on with his meerschaum-pipe in his mouth, and honest Rough-and-ready, not to lose time, employed himself in stowing away more compactly some of the multifarious contents of the place. It was Henry's first idea, as his recollection returned, that they were all in prison, and he was beginning to express a hope that his friends had not been incarcerated on account of their rash attempt to rescue him, when Mary, who hung over him with all the grateful tenderness which the memory of the service he had rendered to her at Hordle Cliff was so well calculated to inspire, whispered to him that he was in safety at the Grange-farm, urging him at the same time not to speak, but to take the composing draught she had prepared, and then endeavour to sleep. An acute throbbing in the head, and a raging thirst, disposed him to obey both injunctions; when Mary, carefully covering him with a thick woollen cloak, again recommended him to seek repose, if he possibly could, and beckoning her companions away, left him to his meditations, or rather to his sufferings, for the pain of his wound was so intense that it would not even allow him to think, while sleep was entirely out of the question.

After some time, the Captain stole gently back into the vault, and seeing Henry's eyes still open, endeavoured to soften his stentorian voice, as he inquired, "Well, lad, what cheer! how goes it?"

In answer to which, Henry declared that his sufferings would not allow him to slumber at present.

"Ay, but you will in an hour or two," said his visitant; "and then you'll wake just as if nothing had happened. That's a rare mixture of Polly's! I've taken it scores of times, when I've been capsized and flabbergasted, just as you are now. Don't like to leave you alone—'cause why?—you'll get down in the mouth, so 'spose I sit and chat with ye a bit, just to cheer you up, till you drop off."

At that moment Henry would have preferred solitude and silence to any company in the world ; but he felt too ill, even to make objections, and the Captain, seating himself upon a sea-chest beside the couch, began to select for conversation such subjects as he thought likely to prove the most interesting to his auditor.

"Tell ye the worst broken head ever *I* got. I and two others were nabbed running a light crop at Selsea Bill—clapped up in limbo—had afore a big wig—penalty hundred pounds, hadn't got it then—'cause why?—it was many years ago, and I only a beginner ; so I was sentenced to go on board a King's ship as a common sailor. Sent to the Tender at Spithead, and stowed away down in the hold. Pitch dark night—port-hole left open—'cause why?—summer time, you see, and as hot as the devil ! So I cut up my jacket into slips, climbed up to the port-hole, and let myself down by the slips which I had tied together. They weren't long enough, so I was obliged to make a splash as I came to the water ; night-watch heard me, though they couldn't see me. Bang ! bang ! whiz ! whiz ! go the poppers. A miss is as good as a mile—so I swam away as hard as I could pull, when all of a sudden, just as I had caught the tide, and was swimming on my back, I came slap against a buoy. Start my timbers ! I thought my whole skull was stove in and bulged. However, I rested awhile upon the buoy, and then started away afresh, and though I could hardly see, 'cause of the blood running into my eyes, I got ashore, and found my way to some of our free-traders, at Gosport. Lord ! how they did stare to see me half naked and covered with blood ! and they knowing it was only the day before that I was limboed aboard the tender ! So they dressed me up instantly like a gentleman swell, clapped a wig over the plaister they had put upon my broken head, I walked two or three miles along the road, that they might not trace me at the offices, was taken by the London coach, and that ere same night I slept at Red-riffe. True as ever I'm sitting here ; only ask Rough-and-ready else, for he was one of them that helped to dress me up. And that was the worst broken head ever *I* had."

Here the Captain paused, as if expecting that his auditor would make some observation upon what he had heard, but as Henry remained silent, he resumed, "Hadn't got my pocket so well lined then as I have now ; but, Lord ! I ain't half so rich as I ought to be. If I had only the hundredth

part of the guineas I've carried across for the merchants—for they always had a confidence in honest old Lion, as they called me; or if I had succeeded with all the crops I've run upon my own account, I might ride in my coach and eight. However, I mustn't complain. You go upon e'er a change from Hamburg to Bilboa, and ask the merchants, either Jack Frog or Mynheer Big-breeches, whether they know Lion Boulderson or not, and what they'll trust him for, that's all. And haven't I stood five-and-twenty years' racket for it all; been chequered and capsized, and prisoned, and sent on board King's ships, and what not? I was there three whole months once in a back room at Chichester upon the skulk, and never took my eye off the latch, except when I was asleep. Black Bess all the time ready saddled and bridled, in a stable that had two doors, opening into different streets, so that come which way they would, I must have had ten minutes start, and that's enough upon *her* back. I'd a lucky little lugger at that time, called the 'Ax about!' Lord! Lord! what fun I've had in that 'ere little lugger. Many a time there comes up a reveny or gover'ment cutter, 'Lugger, ahoy!' says they, 'what's your name?' 'Ax about!' says we. Start my timbers! what a passion I've seen 'em in when I gave 'em this answer three times over, and I and Rough-and-ready laughing all the while fit to split our sides. Well, I was going to tell you, this here lugger had false ceiling and a false kelson, behind which we stowed away a parcel of French clocks and thingabobs. So I run her smack up the river, and off Gravesend they pops me a custom-house officer on board. Didn't care, knew he would never find out our trap; no more he wouldn't only one of the concealed musical clocks, that had been wound up by some damned fool or other, began to sing out, 'Ting, ting, a ring, ting!' behind the false ceiling. Curse your French jabber! says I, wish I had the smashing of your chattering jaws! So the officer seized the lugger, you may be sure; but I was up to him, for I spiced his beer so rarely, that he dropped asleep, fast as a church, and afore he woke we had cleared out, and got ashore all our clocks and rattletaps. It's true as ever I'm sitting here this very minute; you go and ask Rough-and-ready else."

Although the Captain had at first made his voice as *piano* as its nature would admit, it had gradually grown louder, as he became warmer with his subject, until it finally reached

its customary stentorian pitch. At this juncture Henry became impatient of such a noisy infliction, declared that he began to feel drowsy, and wished to be left alone, a request which his rough and loud, but well-meaning friend, immediately obeyed by withdrawing from the vault. In a little time after his departure, the composing draught began to exercise its soothing influence upon the patient, who ultimately forgot in welcome sleep the sufferings occasioned by his wound, and all the disagreeable thoughts to which his strange adventure had given rise.

CHAPTER XII.

Was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her?

THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

THE bailiffs, one of whom was severely hurt in the sudden fray with the smugglers, having betaken themselves to a public house not far from the scene of action, obtained a conveyance to the Manor-house, where they made a deposition before Justice Welbeck of all that had occurred, and procured warrants to be issued for the apprehension of the individuals concerned in the assault and rescue. Although their statements did not directly tend to inculcate Henry, it was concluded, of course, that the parties implicated were his friends and confederates; and it was quickly rumoured through the neighbourhood that the Yankee adventurer, after having nearly killed one of the sheriff's officers, had absconded from Hampshire, which would now, probably, be freed for ever from the presence of such an unprincipled and lawless desperado. Even those who had begun to uphold him since his encounter with the lion, were obliged to yield to this overwhelming evidence of his dangerous character, for most of them took the exaggerated reports upon trust; so that, with the exception of Frank Ringwood, his stanch adherent, who still refused to condemn him until he had heard his defence,—of Fanny Frampton, who shared Ringwood's

opinions, and avowed them with a petulant vivacity,—and of the timid Emily Welbeck, who, fully absolving him from all blame in the transaction, was almost overwhelmed with the fresh misfortunes that had befallen him, and yet feared to give utterance to her sentiments;—with these exceptions among the gentry, and the small, but zealous faction of Hodge Nettletop among the lower class, there were few indeed who had courage to stand up in defence of the traduced and unfortunate Henry Melcomb.

Incensed, on several accounts, at his escape, the malignant Mrs. Penguin determined to turn the occurrence as much as possible to his disadvantage. With this view, she perverted all the circumstances, and ran about from house to house, circulating her slanders with an incredible industry and volubility. At Oakham-hall, however, which she visited in her charitable round, she found the inmates too deeply absorbed in their own troubles to listen to her scandal, or even to see her. Never had that sumptuous edifice been the scene of so much wrath, amazement, and heart-burning, as at the present moment. We have stated that Lord Mossdale had been perverse and intractable enough to dislike Miss Frampton, in exact proportion to the insidious manoeuvring with which Lady Susan, not unassisted by the young lady herself, had studied to entrap him into a marriage; and that he began to affect Fanny, not only in spite of, but rather in consequence of her being undervalued, and slightly regarded by the rest of the family. Fanny was the first pretty girl who had treated him with perfect *nonchalance*, sometimes even with ridicule, not seldom with total neglect, always repelling his advances, and laughing at his protestations. Like most rich young noblemen, Lord Mossdale was a will-pampered man, hating to be hauled in any object of his capricious fancy, and coveting with the more avidity that which seemed to withdraw itself from his grasp. His pride was piqued, and he determined not to be thwarted in his desires. There would, besides, be an *éclat* in proving to the world that he was not to be cajoled by Lady Susan; it would evince penetration to detect the designs of the fair and fascinating “Tuft-hunter;” it would establish his acuteness, his power of thinking and acting for himself, that he should select for his wife the girl whom nobody recommended to his attentions; and finally, it would gratify his own feelings to supplant Ringwood, who had presumed to cross his path,

and whom he began to contemplate with as much jealousy as was compatible with his own supine and careless character, which was not liable to deep impressions of any sort.

Here were abundant weighty motives, it must be confessed, for such a trifling affair as an offer of marriage ; and as Lord Mossdale, from a confidence of success in every thing he said or did, was habitually prompt and plain spoken, he sought out Fanny forthwith, and made her a formal tender of his hand, fortune, and title.

"Your Lordship does me great honour," said Fanny, "but it is scarcely half an hour since I agreed to accept Mr. Ringwood."

"Oh ! that need not make the smallest difference. Ladies are allowed to change their minds, especially in affairs of this sort, when so much better an offer presents itself ; and I flatter myself that you can hardly balance long between Farmer Ringwood and Lord Mossdale."

"Dear, no ! not a minute, not a moment, my Lord," cried Fanny, curtsying with an arch expression, which her suitor immediately construed in his own favour.

"Then I may presume that my rustic rival will receive his dismissal," said the Peer, bowing very graciously in return for the curtsy.

"Nay, my Lord, there you presume too far. I said I would not hesitate a moment in deciding, and you must therefore allow me to say, with many thanks for your favourable opinion, that I decline the honour of receiving your Lordship as my lover, and shall never acknowledge any one in that capacity but Mr. Ringwood."

"You cannot surely be serious."

"Why, they tell me that I am never serious, but if I know any thing of my own heart, I am now, perhaps for the first time in my life, gravely, firmly, unalterably decided in the election I have made !"

"Have you consulted Lady Susan, or your father ?"

"No indeed, my Lord ! I consulted nothing but my own heart, which I apprehend to be the best judge, because it is to be made happy or miserable by the verdict itself has to pronounce. My father would recommend me to marry for money, Lady Susan for pedigree. In you, my Lord, both are united, and you will therefore, of course, command the

suffrages of my parents; a circumstance which only makes me the more regret that you can never hope to obtain mine; but I have the consolation of knowing, that in marrying Ringwood, I shall, in one respect at least, make a most appropriate match."

"In what respect, may I venture to inquire?"

"Why, my Lord, they all tell me I am a silly girl, and it is therefore quite characteristic and fitting, you know, that I should make a silly marriage."

"Egad! I begin to think that they are not so much out in their notions of you," muttered Lord Mossdale. "Then I am distinctly to understand that you reject me in favour of Farmer Ringwood?"

"In favour of Squire Ringwood, with your Lordship's permission, and thus modified, I beg you to consider my decision as not only positive, but irrevocable."—Fanny curtsied and left the room, while her rejected suitor, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, "That girl is a fool, after all, I see, and as stubborn as a mule, so that there will be no use in speaking to Frampton or Lady Susan. I shall bolt from Oakham-hall; it was getting quite a bore, and this affair will make it a regular nuisance." Humming an opera song, as if to conceal his mortification even from himself, he went to his apartment, wrote a letter to his host to say that sudden business called him to London, ordered his horses, and having instructed his valet where to meet him, Lord Mossdale turned his back upon Oakham-hall; his pride, which was severely hurt, because it had never before been subjected to the smallest wound, not allowing him to take leave of his friends, or to run the risk of encountering his successful rival.

Great, indeed, was the surprise and disappointment of Lady Susan, her husband, and her eldest daughter, when, on their return home from a morning's airing in the carriage, they found his Lordship's letter on the table, and learned that he had actually quitted the Hall. Conjectures rapidly succeeded each other, and the parties, in their endeavours to account for this abrupt flight, "still found no end in wandering mazes lost," until Fanny, upon entering the drawing-room, and learning the subject of the enigma to which they were vainly endeavouring to furnish solutions, suddenly clapped her hands together, exclaiming, "Lud! I declare I

shouldn't be surprised if the silly man had run away from the Hall for no other reason in the world than because I refused to have him!"

"Refused to have him!" ejaculated Lady Susan and her husband in the same breath; "to have him for what?"

"Only for a husband! Did you ever hear any thing so ridiculous?" said Fanny, laughing.

"Well, I am utterly lost in amazement!" exclaimed Lady Susan, who was so astounded at the offer and the alleged rejection, that her faculties were for the moment partially bewildered.

"I am surprised at nothing Lord Mossdale does," cried Miss Frampton, with a disdainful toss; "for he is a remarkably weak-headed young man, almost an idiot; and, for my part, I think we are lucky to be rid of him, though, I must say, his manner of sneaking from the Hall is the most pitiful and ungentlemanlike conduct I ever heard of." And she hurried out of the room, lest the vexation, which she was endeavouring to conceal beneath an affected indifference, should become too vehement to be suppressed.

"But child, child!" cried Mr. Frampton; "you do not mean really and positively to assert that you declined my Lord Mossdale for a husband?"

"I did, indeed, Sir; and I rejected him for the best of all possible reasons—because I had just agreed to marry Mr. Ringwood."

"What! marry Ringwood, *Farmer* Ringwood! a pauper! a beggar! the girl must be stark, staring mad," exclaimed Lady Susan.

"Harkee, Fanny, if you marry this pennyless fellow, I will never give you a single shilling of portion," said the father. "I am quite surprised at the fellow's assurance in aspiring to the daughter of a man of my consequence, a magistrate of the county, and one of the Verderers of his Majesty's Forest!—I won't give him a shilling."

"That is precisely what I said to Mr. Ringwood," said Fanny; "I told him that if I were to marry a rich man, I believed I might expect a portion; but that if I united myself to a poor one, I feared you would give me nothing: though to me it would seem much more rational, were you exactly to reverse the process. Mr. Ringwood declared that he was perfectly indifferent upon this point; that he had quite wealth enough, because he was content: and that the

richest and wisest man was he who had the fewest wants, not he who had the most money."

At this daring impeachment of the all-sufficiency of wealth, Frampton fumed, and loudly apostrophized his daughter: Lady Susan, whose suspended faculties had by this time recovered themselves, stormed outright; both loudly declared that they would never give their consent to any such degrading match; and both angrily demanded of Fanny how she had dared, either to accept Ringwood, or reject Lord Mossdale, without consulting them. "That, by settling the matter at once, we might all of us be spared the pain of more than one such altercation as this," said Fanny, firmly but respectfully. "I knew beforehand that we should never agree, and that our irreconcilable differences of opinion would only be aggravated by discussion. The affair is now definitively settled; spare me then, I beseech you, any farther reproaches, and let my future conduct convince you, that if, in seeking my own happiness, I presume to act upon my own judgment, my compulsory disobedience does not spring from any want of filial affection, from any oblivion of filial duty."

Menaces, expostulations, and even entreaties, were alternately used to induce her to give up Ringwood, but all proved equally unavailing. An honest man's love had suddenly transformed the young, playful, and volatile girl, into a stanch, resolute, unflinching asserter of her own right to decide upon the best means of securing her own happiness. Her mood of sportiveness and levity was gone; she listened, indeed, with evident sorrow; no taunts or threatenings provoked her to recriminate upon her parents; she was deferential, patient, almost humble in her voice, look, and demeanour; but in the resolution she had formed, not lightly, but upon principle and consideration, no martyr could be more steadfast and immovable. "It is what I always told you," cried Lady Susan to her husband; "she is not merely an oddity, a simpleton, of whom I predicted from the first that nothing could be made, but an obstinate, self-willed, wrong-headed, stubborn little wretch, and we have no alternative left but to abandon her to the misery which she so rebelliously persists in bringing upon her own head."

Leaving the inhabitants of Oakham-hall to digest this most unpalatable occurrence as best they might, we must remove the scene to Grotto-house, where Henry's rescue from the bailiffs had a material influence in producing, or rather in

accelerating an event, with which, at the first blush, it would appear to have very little connexion. At the time that the rumours of his independent circumstances were current, Mrs. Penguin had easily persuaded the creditor of her imprisoned paramour to take his name as security, and to liberate the original debtor. But having now good reason to believe that she had deceived and imposed upon him for her own insidious purposes, the man, upon discovering Henry's poverty, threatened again to arrest his former prisoner, whom he had not legally exonerated from his responsibility. This state of affairs induced Mrs. Penguin to weigh the propriety of expediting a design which she had long had in contemplation. It has been already intimated, that the sole motive of her pretended and hypocritical anxiety about her husband's health was the hope of influencing his testamentary dispositions, and succeeding to his whole fortune. He was many years older than herself, she considered him a bad life, and she would not willingly forfeit a chance which was so important in amount, and might not be by any means remote in its occurrence. However, there was no use in throwing away her time and her attentions upon a man whom she thoroughly despised, unless she was certain of benefiting herself by the sacrifice; and the juncture now appeared to her to have arrived when it was desirable to place this matter beyond all possibility of doubt.

One morning, accordingly, when her husband was absent upon his geological pursuits, she opened his escrutoire with the key, which she had previously secured for that purpose, and proceeding to inspect his will, discovered, with mingled rage and surprise, that he had bequeathed the whole of his fortune to distant relatives, alleging that it was unnecessary to make any farther provision for his wife, than the two hundred pounds a year which were settled upon her at the time of their marriage. Arising from funded property vested in the name of trustees, this income could not, as Mrs. Penguin well knew, be taken away from her. This important and not very satisfactory discovery soon brought her plans to a crisis. In a clandestine interview with her paramour, it was agreed that, in order to place him beyond the reach of a second arrest, she should elope from her husband, and accompany him in the first instance to Ireland, of which country he was a native. No time was lost in the execution of this purpose, and the astounded geologist, upon returning from

one of his morning rambles, found his escrutoire open, his papers scattered about, the will tossed upon the ground, the money taken from his secret drawer, and a letter lying upon the desk, of which the following is a copy, after correcting sundry errors of orthography.

"Is this your gratitude, you poor, paltry, ungenerous, mean-spirited, shabby fellow? Is this my reward for nursing you, watching over your health, and waiting upon you, early and late, which, considering that I always despised and abominated you, made my life worse than that of a galley-slave, or a West India blackamoor? Why do you think I married you, when you were old enough to be my father, and I couldn't then abide you, and never have done since, unless it was that by bamboozling you for a few years, I might come in for your money, and follow my own fancy with the man that I always loved? I shall do so now, with a part of your dirty money, for the two hundred a year you can't keep from me, and my friend has property of his own in Ireland, though he has been lately a little embarrassed; and, as he is a perfect gentleman, and not half your age, I have no doubt we shall be very happy together.

"I have taken the plate with me, which I consider to be my own, being exchanged, as you well know it was, for what I brought you at our marriage; and as I conclude you would hardly expect me to leave you without sixpence in my pocket, I have taken the trifle of notes and gold that were in the secret drawer. And so leaving you to your own conscience for your base, monstrous ingratitude, and hoping I shall never see your face again, I subscribe myself,

"LAURA PENGUIN."

Mrs. Penguin, at the time of her marriage, possessed half a dozen silver tea-spoons, and a pair of sugar-tongs, which the silversmith, when Penguin purchased two or three hundred pounds worth of new plate, took, and allowed for by weight, deducting the trifling amount from his bill. This the lady, by a beneficial calculation of her own, called an exchange, and had accordingly stripped Grotto-house, when she left it, of every silver article it contained.

Penguin's amazement at reading this letter was so extreme, that it was some time before it could find vent in the exclamation of "What a developement of character! I thought,

when I made this will, that I should draw her out finely—did it on purpose—suspected she would get a peep at it, but never dreamt it would bring my marriage to such a comfortable conclusion.” Upon this occasion the customary aditaments of “exemplary, admirable woman! truly attached wife!” &c. &c. were suppressed; though, indeed, there was no time for their utterance, the delighted geologist beginning immediately to snap his fingers, prance up and down the room, and whistle loudly and lustily at the thought of his being so cheaply freed from one who, having always been a domestic tyrant, although a specious and hypocritical one, had now proved herself in addition to be a loose and unprincipled wanton. His own mercantile experience had convinced him that it was sometimes advantageous to gain a loss, a dictum which he considered to have been never more forcibly illustrated than in the welcome deprivation he had now sustained; so far, therefore, from attempting to pursue the frail fugitive, he gave strict orders to the servants, should she again present herself at the gate, to deny her admission.

CHAPTER XIII.

Alas! no, he's in heaven! where am I now?
 Yonder's the sea, and there's a ship; how't tumbles!
 And there's a rock lies watching under water,
 Now, now it beats upon it, now, now, now,
 There's a leak sprung, a sound one—how they cry!
 Up with her 'fore the wind, you'll lose all else!
 Good night, good night—you're gone!

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

It was on the evening after this occurrence, that a stranger, arriving from London on the outside of the coach, got down at the Cricketers public-house, at the entrance of Thaxted, made his way into the taproom, and called in an asthmatic, wheezing voice, for a rummer of hot brandy and water. Of low stature, and considerably past the meridian of life, his blue sailor trowsers, his coat and waistcoat of shabby black, and his dirty white neckcloth, rendered it somewhat difficult to divine his calling; while his features,

like his garments, were at once weather-beaten and indefinite. Their sunburnt patches indicated long residence in some southern clime, in spite of which superficial bronze upon the prominent parts of his face, there was elsewhere a blotchy and sudden ghastliness that betokened a constitution broken down by confirmed habits of intemperance. His loose flesh and his shrunken limbs showed that he had fallen away from a former state of robustness. Beneath his low brow, overhung by a shock of short bushy hair, were two deep-set gray eyes, so closely placed together as to resemble those of a four-footed animal, though they appeared to be fixed and dimmed by habitual sottishness. Sullenness and craft constituted his predominant expression, and yet the man seemed to be convivial in his habits, and even in his nature, drinking deeply, talking as freely as his husky voice would allow him, and not seldom indulging in a laugh, rendered peculiarly hideous by the ugliness of his mouth, and the ragged discoloured appearance of his few remaining teeth.

His first inquiry when he arrived was, whether Gideon Welbeck were still alive and at the Manor-house, the affirmative answer to which evidently afforded him considerable satisfaction, though he could not conceal his amazement, when informed that the person about whom he was inquiring was a magistrate. "Gideon Welbeck a justice!" he exclaimed to himself several times, and then burst into a long laugh that seemed to be at once hearty and ironical, if such a combination can be imagined; at the conclusion of which he called for more brandy and water, and proceeded to make the most minute inquiries as to the family, fortune, and personal habits of the justice, as he now invariably termed him. The reported greatness of his wealth, magnified of course by Sam Tapps the landlord, with whom the stranger was conversing, filled him with manifest delight; and he more than once started up, exclaiming, "I'll see him to-night, I'll see him to-night;" though when a lad who was in the room offered to show him the way to the Manor-house, he sat down again, saying, "Thank ye, boy, thank ye; but I know the way to the Manor-house long afore you were born or thought of." In this manner, he continued making inquiries and tippling, as successive visitors dropped into the room, until at length, becoming thoroughly intoxicated, his brawling, turbulent nature began to disclose itself, first in quarrels and abusive language, and finally in his knocking

down a by-stander who happened to make some observation that displeased him. A desperate scuffle ensued, and it was not until after he had wounded two or three of his assailants, that he was secured and conveyed to the cage, where he was locked up, and left to pass the night upon some clean straw, with many threats that he should be properly trounced in the morning for his outrageous conduct.

In execution of these menaces, Sam Tapps, who had himself received a black eye in the onslaught, accompanied by two or three witnesses, whose bandaged heads intimated that they had not escaped quite so well as the landlord, and a couple of constables, wielding their emblems of authority, presented themselves at the cage, in order that they might convey their prisoner in due form before the magistrate. Though he had slept off the effects of his intemperance, he had been too much accustomed to drunken brawls to betray the least compunction, or even emotion of any sort at the evidence of his overnight's violence; nay, he gave a complacent chuckle, as he contemplated the results of his pot-valour, simply observing in his croaking voice, "That's my way; when I get a cup too much I always show fight!" adding, in reply to one of the constables who stated they were about to carry him before Justice Welbeck, "So much the better, that's exactly what I came down here about. I have business to settle with the Justice."

"And I trust his worship will settle your business," said one of the wounded men, "by sending you to prison for six months."

"Gideon Welbeck send me to prison!" cried the stranger, with a contemptuous smile—"Heh! heh! it's a devilish deal more likely that I should send him there." This insolent bravado, for such it sounded to the auditors, was attributed to the undissipated remains of his last night's debauch, and the whole party set forward for the Manor-house, manacles being placed upon the prisoner's wrists, to prevent any recurrence of his former violence. During the walk he was perfectly collected and undismayed, attempting even at times a sort of coarse nautical humour, and amusing himself with imagining the sort of reception he should meet with from the justice, whom he familiarly termed his old friend and acquaintance. Provoked at his saucy demeanour, some of his companions assured him that his worship, who was a most rigid punisher of such drunken excesses, would soon

bring him to his senses ; but he only received these denunciations with a triumphant chuckling laugh, generally terminated by a fit of deep hollow coughing.

On their arrival at the Manor-house, they proceeded to the enclosure at the upper end of the great hall, which was screened round, and fitted up so as to resemble a small court of law. His worship, who had already been transacting some official business, was seated in his elevated arm-chair, old Wiverley, his clerk, was at a desk before him, Sam Tapps and his party were admitted within the screen, and the posse of villagers and other curious idlers who had followed them from Thaxted, clustered around it on the outside.

Sam Tapps had already made some progress in the recital of his grievances, being particularly anxious to uphold the orderly character of his house and its customary visitants in the presence of a licensing magistrate, when the latter interrupted him by inquiring the name of the prisoner. "He won't tell us, your Worship, though we have asked him twenty times," was the reply.

"Fellow !" cried the justice, with a stern look and voice ; "this turn will not serve you. Declare your name instantly !"

"I shouldn't mind laying a guinea that you would yourself approve of my reasons for not making it public," said the prisoner, laying his arms gently akimbo, and quietly surveying the magistrate.

"No doubt, sirrah, you have motives enough of your own for keeping it a secret ; but it is not for me to consult your convenience. As a magistrate, I never make any distinctions. Were you a peer, and had misconducted yourself in the manner alleged, I should feel it my duty to expose and punish you ; and as you are not unaccustomed, if we may judge by appearances, to examinations like the present, I know not why you should be so scrupulous, nor why we should respect your wishes for concealment."

"Nay, I have no wishes of the sort upon my own account."

"Whose feelings, then, are you so anxious to spare ?"

"Yours !" said the prisoner, raising his croaking voice to its highest pitch.

Always suspicious and apprehensive, the magistrate, starting at this declaration, pounced his keen restless eye upon the prisoner, and pored upon his features as if he would

have pierced them through. But the lapse of twenty years, the effects of climate, and more than all, the total change of appearance produced by the ravages of intemperance and disease, which had converted a broad-set, hale man, into the ghastly emaciated figure now before him, baffled every effort of his memory, and he continued in a peremptory tone—"Fellow! I know you not,—I never saw you before in my whole life; I desire no concealments, and I charge you once more to declare your name."

"I will first whisper it in your Worship's ear, and if you then desire it, I will repeat it publicly." Without waiting permission for this act of confidence, he advanced, leaned his head close to that of the magistrate, and pronounced in a voice inaudible to all but the party thus addressed, "My name is Barak Gunthorpe!"

Startling and electrical was the effect of this communication. Pushing his chair back with his feet, as if recoiling from a serpent, Welbeck ejaculated in an almost breathless whisper—"Gracious Heaven! I see it, now you come nearer, I ought to have known those wolfish eyes. Man! man!—" He could utter no more. His straining eyes, wild with terror, were riveted upon the face of the prisoner, he grasped either arm of the chair with a convulsive energy, his teeth, after chattering together for a few seconds, became immoveably cleuched, a frightful rigidity spread itself over his features, by an unconscious effort he half raised himself from the chair, and then falling backwards in a fit, remained stiff and motionless!

Sudden amazement and consternation sat upon every countenance, except that of the prisoner, who, with a half-suppressed chuckle, exclaimed, "I thought I should fetch him up with a broad yaw, but I hope he's not going to founder yet a while, or, at least, not till I have had the overhauling of him."

Some of the by-standers, as soon as they had recovered from their bewilderment, alarmed the family, and in a few minutes Emily, followed by two maid-servants, rushed into the hall, when, with the assistance of old Wiverley, they wheeled the still senseless justice into the parlour. Shrinking and timid as she was at the mere apprehension of a danger or trial of any sort, Emily's presence of mind seldom deserted her at the moment when it was wanted. Her timidity expended itself beforehand; whatever courage remained

at the bottom of her heart was therefore ready for emergencies. Infinitely more distressed than any of the others, and yet far more collected, she ordered such remedies to be applied as experience had taught her to be efficacious; for these attacks, though rare, were by no means unprecedented; and when she saw that her father was beginning to recover his senses, she dismissed all the attendants from the room, and sat down by his side. Even Wiverley, though an old and faithful servant, she would not allow to remain, spite of his instances to that effect; for her father, when labouring under the influence of terror, prostration of spirit, or that partial hallucination of mind with which he was occasionally afflicted, would sometimes, in remorseful self-accusation, or agonized deprecations of punishment, accuse himself of crimes, which she knew not how to believe, but which, nevertheless, she did not wish to be overheard by any ear but her own.

A deep-drawn sigh was the first evidence of returning consciousness, after which he slowly opened his eyes, and seeing his daughter by his side, exclaimed in a faint voice, "Emy, my child, I have had a horrible dream—most horrible!" and he was again silent, as if endeavouring to recall the fearful vision that had thus disturbed him. Endeavouring, after a brief space, to raise himself up, he suddenly exclaimed, "Ha! what is the meaning of this? This is my chair of justice! How came it here?—It was not a dream then, not a vision,—but Barak Gunthorpe is alive—he has been here! The Lord have mercy upon me! I am a lost man. What shall I do? where shall I hide myself? whither shall I fly?" and his face again became frightfully convulsed as he fell back in his chair.

"Be composed, my dearest father!" said Emily, tenderly embracing him; "you were examining a stranger in the hall when you were seized with one of these terrible fits; but it is passing away, and you will shortly be yourself again."

"Never, never!" exclaimed Welbeck, clutching the arm of his daughter, and then suddenly letting it go, and striking his hand sharply on his forehead, he continued, "The gibbet! the gibbet! I have seen that which may hurry me to the gallows, and leave you, my child, a disgraced and penny-less orphan!"

"Utter not such horrid words, my dearest father! you know not what you say."

"Where is the man?" cried Welbeck, in a loud and fierce voice.

"What man? asked Emily, startled at her father's sudden vehemence.

"What man? *The man!* he who holds my life and fortune in his hand, the cause of all my guilt, the curse of my existence—the villain Barak Gunthorpe! Hah! have I pronounced his name? Forget it, Emy. If you love your father, if you value yourself, if you would save me from punishment, perhaps from a public execution, and yourself from becoming an ignominious pauper, never, never, never let that accursed name escape from your lips, as it has from mine. Let me think, let me think. Why did you not tell me where he was? Where is he? where is he?"

"I left a pinioned man standing in the hall, surrounded with constables and other people."

"That is the wretch! he must not remain there; he must not be pinioned. Gracious heaven! I may myself be soon pinioned, and standing at the bar of justice to answer for my life. Send him to me instantly. No, no, I will first see Wiverley. Let him attend me immediately. Wiverley! Wiverley! where is Wiverley!"

While Emily retired to fetch the clerk, her father, by one of those violent efforts which sometimes enabled him to subdue for the moment the fearful perturbations of mind to which he was subject, had acquired such a comparative degree of composure when Wiverley arrived, as to demand, without much external manifestation of the dismay that racked his heart, the particulars of the charge upon which the stranger was brought before him. When informed that it was only a drunken affray and assault, he testified manifest relief, and breathed more freely. "Tell these good people," said he, "that the prisoner is an old acquaintance of my own—would to heaven that I had never seen him!—that for important family considerations he wishes to withhold his name, but that he is willing to make compensation to all parties for the damage they have sustained. Settle this foolish affair, Wiverley, without loss of time. You need not speak to the prisoner. Mind that, I entreat you, good Wiverley, and let not any other question him. Emy will give you whatever money they may require."

"But how much shall I offer them?" inquired the clerk, who, when he found that Welbeck was to be the paymaster, concluded that he would wish to drive a close bargain.

"Begone! and give them what they ask!" cried the magistrate, impatiently waving his hand, and adding, when his clerk had left the room, "O my child! my child! what are gold and bank-notes to me now, when to-morrow I may be an arraigned criminal, and all the wealth for which I have toiled and sinned may be forfeited and gone? Take the keys of my safe, give these people what they demand, and, for God's sake! send them from the house. I am upon thorns, tenter-hooks, while they have this man among them, one word from whose mouth may ruin us all for ever. Get him away from them; separate them, separate them; some of them may recollect him.—Go! go! go!"

Emily shortly returned, stating that the landlord and his companions had been satisfied and dismissed, but that the constables, before they withdrew, desired to know whether they were to remove the manacles and set the prisoner at liberty. "Let him be unbound, by all means," was the reply; "I know the purport of his visit: he will demand speech of me, and he must have it—must have it; though I would rather turn mad dogs into my bosom to devour my heart at once, than have its unhealed and festering sores torn open, as they will be, by this detested pander to my former guilt!"

Emily returned to the hall with her father's orders that the stranger should be unfettered, which the constables immediately obeyed, and then took their departure. "You are the justice's daughter, I suppose," sullenly croaked the man, pulling the sleeves of his coat over his wrists;—"why, ay, Miss, this is the least the old gentleman could do. Put handcuffs upon me, here in the Manor-house, and before Gideon Welbeck—I beg your pardon, Miss, I mean before his worship Justice Welbeck! Heh! heh! heh! Well, I came for justice, and so, with your leave, Miss, I should like just to have half an hour's private chat with his Worship."

"If you will be pleased to wait here for a few minutes I will return and conduct you to my father," said Emily, hurrying from the hall, and not wishing that any of the servants should communicate with the stranger.

"Not here, not in the parlour—I will not see him here," said Welbeck, when his daughter rejoined him; "let it be in my own room,—in the porch-room, where we cannot be overheard; nevertheless, watch, my child, watch carefully that no eaves-droppers or listeners approach the door. Thank

you, thank you ; I want not your arm, I feel strong enough now. Bring the wretch to the porch-room."

Emily having conducted the stranger to her father's apartment, stationed herself in the passage outside, awaiting with extreme agitation the result of this mysterious interview. Upon entering the chamber, Gunthorpe drew a chair, and seated himself with the easy assurance of a vulgar man, who, feeling that he has a power over his superior which brings him down to his own level, holds himself absolved from all observances of respect.

"Wretched and desperate man!" said Welbeck, willing, if possible, to intimidate his unwelcome visitant, "why have you ventured hither? Know you not that if you are recognised, the whole scheme of your villany may be detected, and that your life may be the forfeit of your rashness?"

"Well, and isn't it all the same with *your* villany, and *your* life, please your Worship?" asked Gunthorpe, pronouncing the latter word with a sneering chuckle, which was renewed as often as he subsequently repeated it. "You must recollect that I have been upwards of twenty years ago, and if you yourself didn't recollect me, 'tisn't likely any body else will. Ay, I'm quite another guess chap to look at from what I was when we settled that little bit of a job between us; for the climate of the East Indies, and the post of purser's clerk on board a King's ship, don't make a man younger or fatter, to say nothing of grog, for which I always had too strong a fancy. Why, we haven't met afore since I popped the young one into Davy's-locker; and you've never thanked me for it, though it has made you as rich as a Jew, and a magistrate, and a great man, and what not.—I say, your Worship, I settled this business for him properly, didn't I? To be sure, it did blow a spanking gale from the east and north-east when I turned the youngster adrift, and I reckon the salt-water soon stopped his squalling and caterwauling, and made him into famous chicken-meat for the fishes. Heh? he! he!"

"Callous, remorseless wretch! can you make a jest of that horrible murder, for such it was? Can you laugh at that upon which I can never reflect without a pang of anguish that drives me to the brink of madness?"

"Gammon! It hasn't prevented your feathering your nest, and I don't see why it should hinder your laughing. You've had a pretty sight more reason to laugh than I have, what

with parks, and manors, and estates, and stocks of all sorts, that they tell me you've scraped together ; while I have been toiling and drudging in Canada, and the East Indies, and the Lord knows where, as a miserable purser's clerk, sometimes without a shot in my pocket to buy grog. Now this I don't call quite fair, considering I've only got to open my mouth to make all your fine estates flow away from you like an ebb tide, and leave you upon the rocks, high and dry, bulged and scuttled !"

" But you cannot thus open your mouth without giving the hangman power over your own life."

" As a magistrate, your Worship ought to know that I can 'peach, turn King's evidence ; and whether or not, I can better afford to run risks than you can, not having any parks, and estates, and lands, and riches, and such like, to forfeit."

" But you have your life to lose, and this you are now putting in peril by so rashly venturing into this neighbourhood. Why have you done this ?"

" Why ? you know why very well ;—'cause you wouldn't answer my letters, nor send me any money. I should have come and beat up your quarters long since, if I could have got discharged, or obtained a passage back to Europe."

" And what is your object in seeking me out now ?" inquired Welbeck, not making any reply to his observation about the letters.

" Why, you know that too, pretty well, I suspect. I want money. I'm not going to be left without a double allowance of grog, when you are rolling in riches."

" I gave you, twenty years ago, all that you demanded."

" Like enough ; but I didn't know then that the Manor-house estate would prove such a rich prize ; and if you've had twenty years' respite, you need the less grumble at cashing up now. But to come to book, for I hate long stories—I don't want to venture here again, 'cause, as you say, there may be risk in it for both of us ; and moreover, I don't desire to see your face again, and ten to one you've no particular wish to see mine. So, to lay me up snug and warm for the rest of my life—(I sha'n't live long, the doctors tell me, but that's no odds.)—and to give me my double allowance of grog—which they say is killing me, but I can't help it if it do, I must have a thousand pounds at once, and that I call letting you off uncommon cheap."

"And if I give you this sum, what security have I against future applications of the same sort?"

"Security! why the chance that I shall drink myself to death afore the money's all gone. Besides, I shall go back to Newcastle, where I was born, and never leave it again, for I'm too old and ill to roam over the world any more."

"On that condition you shall have the money; but to ensure your betaking yourself immediately to Newcastle, it shall only be paid to you in that town."

"With all my heart; provided you give me enough to pay my passage, for I've turned my last yellow-boy into grog."

"That shall be supplied to you: and now, have you any other demands to make?"

"Yes. I didn't get half a ration for breakfast this morning, and so I should like my dinner here, in the Manor-house, if your Worship has no objection; and if you have any Jamaica rum, or prime old Cognac, I shouldn't mind drinking your health in it."

Such was Welbeck's terror of Gunthorpe's being recognised if he returned to Thaxted, or of his blurting out in his cups some fact or confession of perilous importance to both parties, that he not only willingly proffered him a dinner, but urged him to sleep at the Manor-house, and take advantage of a London stage, which would pass the Park Lodge on the following morning. To this proposition a ready assent being given, Welbeck gladly quitted the room, for the sight of the man's face, with all the hideous recollections that it called forth, was indescribably repugnant to him; and summoning Wiverley, he bade him supply the stranger with such refreshments as he needed, not forgetting the liquor, the consumption of which seemed to constitute the sole remaining enjoyment of the life it was shortening. Wiverley was instructed to furnish his dinner in the porch-room, to prepare a bed for him in the nearest chamber, to converse with him as little as possible, and to bring word to his master when he should have retired to rest. This he did at an early hour, for his last night's slumbers in the cage had not been very refreshing; and it was an incredible relief to the mind of Welbeck, who had passed the whole evening in the most harrowing alternations of remorse and terror, when he learned that this perilous inmate, overcome by hard drinking, lay buried in a profound sleep. Appalling indeed

had been the strife and the misgiving of his heart, for the apparition of Gunthorpe, whom he had latterly hoped and believed to have been dead, was an event fraught with ten thousand dangers, present and to come. The fellow might repent his bargain, and rise in his demands; he might unintentionally betray the dreadful secret on which their mutual fates were suspended; he might be recognised before he left the neighbourhood, which would be scarcely less perilous; or even if he were conveyed away without discovery, and actually went to Newcastle, what assurance was there against his returning at some future time, to sear his eyes, to harrow up his heart, to make fresh extortions, which might, perhaps, finally terminate in exposure, ignominy, and punishment?

Exhausted as Welbeck was by the fit with which he had been visited, by the violent effort that had restored to him a certain degree of self-possession during the colloquy with Gunthorpe, and by the harassing agitation of his evening thoughts, he would still have been unable to obtain the repose of which he stood so much in need, had not Emily prevailed on him to take a powerful composing draught, which she always kept prepared for those moments of morbid and distressing excitation. In the distraction of his mind, he threw himself upon the bed without undressing, and, under the influence of the opiate, at length sunk into sleep. But his slumbers were haunted with fearful dreams and imaginary spectral apparitions, more appalling than even his waking terrors. Alarmed by his groans and cries, the watchful Emily, who always slept in an outer chamber, hurried to his bed-side, and beheld her wretched parent sitting up, though still asleep, and struggling apparently with some hideous nightmare. His hands involuntarily opened and clutched, his face was convulsed, his lips were drawn back in horror from his grinding teeth, his nostrils opened and collapsed with the violence of his hard, audible breathing, a profuse perspiration covered his features, and even dropped from his hair, like morning dew from the leaves of a tree, and he at length gasped in a broken, agitated whisper—"Yes, it is the court of assize, there is the judge; see! yonder is the sheriff with his white wand—the clerk of the arraigns is reading the indictment; ha! who is that in the witness-box?—It is he: it is he! the villain Barak Gunthorpe! But they cannot punish *me*! it was that re-

merciless villain, not I, that did the deed. And yet they drag me to the scaffold! Pray with me, pray with me, reverend sir, for I have much need of mercy. Heavens! what a multitude of faces, what millions of eyes are staring at me! And there is my poor boy Godfrey in the crowd, and my darling Emily! Hark! she screams! she faints! The Lord have mercy upon me! Save me! save me!" and uttering a deep groan he again sank upon his pillow.

Aghast and heart-sicken at what she saw and heard, Emily dropped into a chair beside him, clasping her hands together, and intently watching her unhappy parent. Though he breathed hard, he seemed for awhile to be more composed, but the phantasmagoria of his disordered imagination did but present to him new images of terror. Again raising himself suddenly in the bed, he pointed with his finger, exclaiming, in the same agitated whisper as before, "See! there is the beautiful little boy, walking along the surface of the waters in his winding-sheet and shroud!" and then gradually raising his finger higher and higher, he continued, "Look! he mounts! he mounts up—up—up! the clouds open—he is received into the sky, the angels long to kiss him, as they see that lovely child, with his curly hair, passing sorrowfully before them. See! he kneels at the footstool of Heaven, he accuses me of having compassed his death,—the name of Gideon Welbeck rings through the sky—the music of Heaven ceases, and the horror-stricken angels set up one universal shriek of murder! murder! murder!"

During this soliloquy Welbeck had gradually raised his voice until he shouted out the concluding words with a yelling vehemence that effectually broke the spells of slumber, and opening his eyes with a bewildered look, he exclaimed,—“Is that you, Emy? where am I? what noise was that I heard?”

“You have been dreaming, Sir; you cried out in your sleep, and I hurried to your bed-side,” replied the afflicted daughter.

“Are you sure it was only a dream? Methought they came to apprehend me on a criminal charge;—methought——”

At this moment a low knocking was heard at the door of the outer bed-chamber, when the terrified Welbeck, starting up and seizing one of the pistols which were always placed

by his bedside, cried out, "Ha! it was no dream! They come—they come! but I will not be taken alive, they shall not make a public spectacle of me; if Gunthorpe is with them, I will shoot the villain through the head!"

"For Heaven's sake, be composed," said Emily, trembling violently, for she began to be infected with her father's fears. "It is nothing that need alarm us; I will see what it is, and return instantly." Hurrying with unsteady feet to the outer door, she found that Wiverley, disturbed by the shouts of murder, had hastened to her apartment to see what was the matter. Emily thanked him for his attention, stating that her father had probably been reading some frightful play, which had suggested the horrid dream that had occasioned him to call out in his sleep. "Ah, Miss Emily! Miss Emily!" cried the old man, "these terrors of the night come from something worse, I fear, than reading plays. I wouldn't know what his Worship has known, no, not for all his gold, and all his parks and broad manors, if they were doubled ten times over."

"Return to bed, good Wiverley," said Emily, "and say nothing of what you may see or hear; for my father is not well, and knows not what he says. Go, go—good night!" With which words she flew back to her parent, whom she found in the same attitude, the loaded pistol in his trembling hand, and looks of fearful desperation in his face. "Soh!" he ejaculated, falling back upon the pillow, when told that the knocking had only proceeded from Wiverley, "I am respited, I can breathe again—O conscience! conscience! what a coward dost thou make of me!"

He relinquished his grasp of the pistol, as if unconsciously, and Emily, observing that his eyes were again closed, softly removed it, and taking its fellow from the table, concealed both the weapons in the closet of her own apartment, when she returned to the bed-side, and sat watching, until she had the consolation of finding that her father had sunk into a sleep, which, from the calmer expression of his features, seemed to be undisturbed by any of the terrific phantasms that had so lately haunted him. She again retired, therefore, to her own bed, and after remaining for some time a prey to the most heart-lacerating thoughts, sunk at last into an uneasy dose.

Not long, however, had she thus remained, when she started up on hearing a footfall, and with mingled amaze-

ment and dismay, saw her father passing out into the corridor, holding the night-lamp in one hand, and in the other a naked dagger, which she had not observed when she removed the pistols. In a moment she was by his side, but she dreaded the effect of suddenly arresting him in his progress; for though he was now awake, she feared, by the wild expression of his eyes, that his mind was wandering, and that he was unconscious of his actions. "Hist! hist!" he whispered, as he stole forward on tiptoe, "this is the way to Gunthorpe's room; the villain shall never appear against me! If he is awake, I will despatch him with my dagger; and if he sleeps, I will smother, smother, smother him, and all the world shall think he died of drunkenness! Ha! ha! ha! I shall then be able to sleep o' nights."

The sepulchral voice, the hideous laugh, the wild features that assumed a spectral appearance in the ghastly glare of the lamp, and the low echoes of his feet as he thus traversed the passage in the dead of night, and with such a murderous design, presented a combination so awful and terrific, that the shuddering Emily could scarcely refrain from sinking to the floor. Summoning her courage, however, she softly took his arm, and by a gentle compulsion, to which he passively yielded, succeeded in guiding him back to his own room. At sight of the bed, his hallucination seemed in some degree to cease, for he deposited the lamp and the dagger upon the table, and recognising Emily, exclaimed, "What! not a-bed yet, child? it is late, and I am cold; quick! quick! cover me up, and begone!"

He then threw himself upon the bed, his daughter covered him up as he had desired, and, after watching for some little time by his side, had once more the satisfaction of seeing him sink into repose, when she removed the dagger, secured the outer door, and drawing an arm-chair to his bed-side, placed herself within it in such a manner that he could not move without disturbing her. These precautions were, however, unnecessary; the opiate, which was a powerful one, began now to exert its influence, and though his slumbers were not refreshing in their nature, they were heavy and deep, for he did not awake until a late hour of the following morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh ! what is man, his excellence and strength,
 When, in an hour of trial and desertion,
 Reason, his noblest power, may be suborned
 To plead the cause of vile assassination ?

FATAL CURIOSITY.

HENRY MELCOMB, whom we left asleep in the concealed vault of the smugglers at the Grange-farm, passed a much better night than he had anticipated, the potion administered to him by Mary having, as the Captain had predicted, produced the most beneficial effects. When he awoke, the giddiness and headache had left him, and he suffered no other inconvenience than the pain arising from the bruise, which, to one of his hardy temperament, was of very trivial importance.

"Well, lad, what cheer ? how goes it ?" cried his kind-hearted host, when he visited him on the following morning. "Lord ! I knew you wouldn't long be lying on your beam-ends ! I said we should presently right ye, after taking that cordial of Polly's. Shiver the Longsplice ! if I wouldn't back Polly against all the humbug-doctors and gallipot-lubbers in Hampshire ! Well, lad, you shall stay with us as long as you like ; at all events, till the hue and cry is over ; for I dare say there'll be capiasen enough out, and we'll make your quarters comfortable for you, I warrant. You'll find our secret larder t'other end of the vault ; always full of game and venison, generally the fattest bucks out of Boldrewood Walk,—'cause why ?—'twouldn't do for the keepers and us to be on bad terms together, seeing we might spoil one another's sport ; so we supply them with free-trade gin and backy, with a silk-handkercher, or so, now and then, for their girls, and they keep our larder full of birds, and hares, and bucks, and such like, and that's all fair, and no one han't a right to complain—'cause exchange is no robbery, you know. When we have spirits and wines of all sorts, at first cost. For my own part, I seldom drink any thing but punch, good stiff punch—but we've got plenty of

claret, and thin, wisby-washy French stuff, if you like it, though I don't hold 'em to be any better than so much belly-vengeance."

"When you first talked of venison," said Henry, "I concluded that you took the liberty of supplying yourselves out of the Forest or neighbouring parks."

"Vast there, lad! no need of that, when the keepers fill our larder for us. Besides, d'ye think I'd have any sneaking, rascally poachers in my company, that would go a deer-stalking in a gentleman's park, which is little better than flat robbery? What! old Blacklocks! old Lion Boulderson encourage poachers, and such like loose fellows? Not I! As to the King's deer, indeed, that's all fair game, and quite another guess matter. Arn't such a canting humbug as to pretend there's any harm in that, any more than in my own business of a free-trader. Lord! we've a fellow here in the Forest—Green Jemmy we call him,—'cause why?—always wears a green dress, that he may hide the better in the trees. A rare fellow that among the King's deer! and as honest as the day, for he never touches any body's else. Got a rifle that unscrews into three pieces, and goes into his pocket; drinks with the keepers, pretends to be one of us,—hah! hah!—never suspect him—'cause why?—he han't got a gun, as they think? so he knows their haunt, cuts across the Forest, shoots a fat buck, drags him into the bushes, ups into a tree where he waits till night, and then runs into port with his prize: and in this way honest Jemmy will carry you off a hundred head in the year. True as ever I'm sitting here this very minute; only ask Rough-and-ready else. Jemmy would have made a capital free-trader, for he's quite the gentleman, quite one of us; only he likes dry land better than the sea. Well, but you never said, lad, what game you would choose for dinner."

Henry told him that he would only trespass upon his hospitality for a breakfast, since, as he now felt sufficiently well to take care of himself, it was his purpose to quit his present place of concealment in the course of the morning. If the Captain was surprised at this declaration, he was still more amazed when his guest informed him that he excessively regretted the well-meant, though most inconsiderate, zeal that had prompted his rescue; that he particularly condemned the violence which had accompanied the rash enterprise; and added, that, although he might doubt the wisdom of

authorizing imprisonment for debt, he felt obedience to the laws to be so paramount a duty, that he should immediately return before Justice Welbeck, and surrender himself a prisoner. "But let me be clearly understood upon one point," said Henry, "whatever may be the consequences of my forcible rescue, they shall fall upon my own head, for never will I betray the generous friends whose misguided impetuosity led them to extricate me from the hands of the bailiffs."

"I arn't afraid of your blabbing," said the Captain—"cause why?—you're a brave and hearty fellow—Hordle Cliff for that, and it's none but cowards that scamp and peach. But start my timbers! what do you mean by misguided friends? Didn't you do my Polly and Gentleman George a good-turn t'other day, and were I and honest Rough-and-Ready to stand by you, and see you grabbed by the land-sharks, without ever lending a hand to scuttle them? No!—not if you preached till Christmas. I don't pretend to argufy as you do,"—and indeed Henry had, as usual, stated his opinions in somewhat too logical a form for his auditor—"but the upshot of my argument is this, if you go and put yourself into limbo of your own accord, you're the biggest fool in all Hampshire—that's my notion of the matter."

Notwithstanding this verdict of stultification, Henry persisted in his intention, and as that remarkable decision of manner to which we have before adverted, plainly evinced that nothing would dissuade him from his purpose, the Captain forbore from any farther expostulation, contenting himself with observing, "that he had done his duty, but if a chap wouldn't be helped out of a scrape, there was no use in helping him."

Just as Henry was preparing, however, to take his departure, information was brought by some of the scouts, whom the Captain kept constantly upon the watch, that there were suspicious-looking fellows lurking about the farm, who, in all probability, were men employed by the bailiffs to recover their prisoner. Henry would have willingly surrendered to them at once, but as he could not do this without betraying where he had been concealed, and thus compromising his rescuers, he consented to remain two days longer in the asylum they had provided for him; when, the coast being reported clear, he quitted the Grange-farm, the captain giving him such a cordial grasp of the hand at parting, that it

was numbed for some minutes afterward, and bent his course to the Manor-house, to make a public and formal surrender of his person. This happened on the morning after the memorable visit of Barak Gunthorpe, which worthy personage had just reached the untenanted lodge of the park, accompanied by old Wiverley, who had been specially charged not to quit him till he saw him deposited on the top of the London coach, when they encountered Henry at the gate. Gunthorpe started with amazement, rubbed his eyes, stared at Henry, and exclaimed, "Why it is he, unless I'm blind drunk! ay, that it is, as sure as ever there's rum in Jamaica! I say, Sir, ax pardon, arn't you Mr. Henry Melcomb?"

"That is my name."

"Whew!" cried Gunthorpe, as he gave a long whistle, slapped his hand upon his thigh, and stared at him with increased astonishment. "Here's a pretty rig! Curse me, if I didn't think you were thousands of miles off in the back settlements of America, which is the last I heard of you. Why, you haven't surely forgot me, Master Henry."

"Indeed, my friend, I do not at present recollect you; what is your name?"

"My name aboard ship was Joe Davis; mayhap I've another, but no odds for that; don't you remember Groggy Joe, as they called me?"

"What! the purser's clerk on board my father's ship? yes, yes, I now recall your features, but you are much altered since I last saw you."

"Like enough, it's some years ago. They told me there was a young chap of the name of Melcomb, that had been after Justice Welbeck's daughter, and only to think of its being you, when I thought you were among the Yankees! I say, Sir, you and I may want to have a palaver together, so I'll make bold to ax where I may find you?"

"Most likely, I am sorry to say, in the jail at Southampton, for I am now going before Justice Welbeck to surrender myself a prisoner for debt."

"What? *you* a prisoner for debt, and committed by Gideon Welbeck! No, no—curse me if that must be?—that's a deal too bad."

"The coach is coming," said Wiverley, "and his Worship strictly ordered me——"

"Ay, ay, old boy," said Gunthrope, "I sha'n't forget

the condition, for a bird in the hand's worth two in the bush ; but I mustn't cut adrift from you, Mr. Melcomb, without knowing how I may pull you up again."

"If I can serve you," said Henry, "you will always hear of me from Mrs. Tenby, at the George, at Thaxted ; but my present destination is to prison at Southampton."

"Why, it's not unlike, Sir, that we may serve one another ; but I'll think of that while I'm scudding along the road. The prison at Southampton—I know it, and so I did afore ever you were born.

The stage was now stopped, Gunthorpe mounted, Wiverley remained to watch him out of sight as he had been ordered, and Henry made his way across the Park, musing upon this unexpected meeting, upon the chances of his seeing Emily, and the combination of untoward circumstances which were thus about to consign him to a prison, loaded with imputations of offence which he had never committed, and yet from which, such was the peculiar waywardness of his fate, he could not exculpate himself, without criminating others whom he had promised never to implicate. On his arrival at the house, he made his way into the hall, where he found several of the Thaxted villagers, two constables, and a few strangers, assembled upon business. The surprise of those who recognised him, at his unexpected appearance in such a place, was excited to the highest pitch, when he stated that he had been no party to the rescue, and that he came to surrender himself a voluntary prisoner, acknowledging no other offence than the debt for which he had been arrested. The by-standers informed him that the justice was very ill, and that they were expecting the return of Wiverley, to learn whether there was any chance of his worship being able to sit in the course of the morning. While they were thus talking, Emily entered the Hall, and had just stated to some of the party that her father was too much indisposed to attend to any official business, when she caught sight of Henry. A start of surprise, and a tremor of blushing confusion betrayed her emotion ; she curtsied hastily, and was about to withdraw, when Henry exclaimed, "One word, Miss Welbeck, only one word, before you retire. Let me implore you not to trust to appearances, but to believe me as innocent of this, as I am of every other charge that has been brought against me."

"I do, I do !" cried Emily, fervently clasping her hands

together, and regarding him with a look of unshaken trust and attachment. "I have seen Mr. Penguin." She hesitated, blushed still deeper than before, and her increasing confusion would only allow her to add, "My father is very ill, he can see no one to-day, when she hurried out of the Hall.

Henry understood not this allusion to the justice done him by Penguin, who, since the full exposure of his wife's character, had publicly stated his total disbelief of the charges she had brought against him; but he could not misinterpret Emily's expressive look; it intimated something beyond mere confidence in his innocence; and in this cheering hope of her undiminished regard, he felt inspired with fresh courage to endure the present trials that threatened him, and patiently to await the final vindication of his character. At Wiverley's return, he desired that his surrender might be formally registered by the clerk in the minute-book, and then requesting a constable to take charge of him, and accompany him to the bailiff, one of whom he understood to be still sojourning at Thaxted, he replaced himself in the hands of the officer, and desired that he might be conducted to prison, in execution of the writ wherewith he had been already served. An occurrence so novel puzzled the apprehensions of the legal functionary. Lunacy seemed to be the most plausible solution of the enigma; but as there might be a lucid interval in which his recovered prisoner should attempt to escape, or as the same rough friends who rescued him before might be lying in wait to liberate him a second time, the bailiff ordered a post-chaise, which conveyed them both to Southampton, in the prison of which town Henry was duly deposited.

Although he was thus cruelly immured, without the remotest prospect of liberation, he immediately forgot himself and his own wrongs, in plans for remedying sundry errors in the administration of the prison, the existence of which his inquiries, aided by his own natural shrewdness, had enabled him to discover in the first hour after his arrival; and which, at no remote period, he lived to expose and reform. Solaced by such benevolent schemes, though not without an occasional pang of regret, as he adverted to the impassable gulf that now seemed to be placed between him and Emily Welbeck, he laid himself down at night upon his miserable pallet, and enjoyed that sound, sweet sleep which can only be tasted by those whose calm conscience, supplying repose from

within, renders them independent of external circumstances.

Early on the following morning he heard a knocking at the door of the little closet in which he slept, and for which, inconvenient and forlorn as it was, he had agreed to pay an extra price, because it was detached, and he had no chum, or companion. On opening the door, he beheld Barak Gunthorpe, whom, however, he only knew by the name of Davis, and who stated, that instead of proceeding to London, after their late separation, he had quitted the coach when it had travelled a few miles, and had made his way to Southampton, for the express purpose of the interview and confabulation which he now came to seek.

"Indeed," said Henry, "I am sorry you have taken so much trouble, for I fear I have now little means of serving you."

"Like enough; but I can give you plenty of means of serving me and yourself too, if you'll find inclination. I say, Sir, we can't be overheard here, can we? No shot-holes for listeners, are there? no leaks in the sheathing, for I don't want to run my head into the fool's noose, if I can help it."

Henry declared that he might state whatever he had to say, with a certainty of perfect secrecy; and Gunthorpe, having first locked the door, continued, "I say, Master Henry," (it was thus that he had formerly been accustomed to address him,) "what'll ye give me for my share, if I make a great mass of ye: put ye in possession of lands, and estates, and fine houses, and lots of money, and all sorts of good things?"

"I am by no means clearly convinced that these *are* good things," said Henry, beginning to suspect, from the strangeness of his question, that his old friend "Groggy Joe," was still under the influence of his favourite liquor.

"Not good things! What do ye mean by that? Won't they give you every thing you can desire upon earth?"

"No; they cannot confer upon me that which I should most covet, for they cannot ensure to me health, nor content, nor the esteem of my fellow-creatures, nor long life here, nor eternal happiness hereafter."

"You're a rum chap, and so you always were from a child; but I tell ye what they can do—they can enable you to be revenged upon your enemies."

"As a Christian I can do this without money, or means

of any sort, for I can forgive them ; I can return them good for evil, and thus convert their hearts, while I gratify my own."

"I don't understand this sort of gammon; but at all events, money can do one thing for you which nothing else can, it can take you out of your present misery as a prisoner."

"I am not miserable, for I have committed no sin. Besides, I think I can reform some of my brother prisoners, and improve their lot, and I am never unhappy when I have a prospect of benefiting others."

"Curse me, if you're not the queerest customer ever I came across! Why, I suppose lands, and houses, and fine fortunes, will go a begging next, since fellows in prison don't think 'em worth having. But lookee here, Master Henry, what would ye say, if all these things were to give you Miss Welbeck into the bargain?"

"How! what should you know of my regard for Miss Welbeck? Yes, indeed, if without any sacrifice of honour in myself, or infliction of injury upon another, I could call Emily my own, and be enabled to support her becomingly—but these are idle dreams!"

"No they ar'n't; I think I can undertake to do all this for you."

"You undertake!—are you in your sober senses?"

"Ha'n't touched a drop this morning. Lookee here! do ye think such an old curmudgeon as Welbeck, would have given me this here order for a thousand pounds, if I hadn't got a secret worth knowing." And taking the letter from a greasy old leather-case, he opened, and put it into Henry's hands, who expressed no small surprise at its contents.

"Now, as I have a conscience, such as it is," resumed Gunthorpe, "and had much rather do the right thing, especially if I don't lose by it, I suppose you will promise to be a pretty sight better than a thousand pounds to me, if I make good all I say, throwing Miss Welbeck into the bargain?"

"I will make no engagement, I will promise nothing till I know fully the nature and extent of your communication; after which, you may trust to be rewarded according to my sense of justice."

"I don't object to that, for you were always a generous young fellow, and I dare say will give me more than ever I should think of asking. But there's one thing you must and shall promise afore I open my mouth, and that is, to forgive

me my share of the business, and never to bring me into trouble ; for, harkee, Master Henry, though I hope I shall make it all up to ye now, I've been the very worst enemy ever you had in the world."

"Have you ? then take my hand in token of my free forgiveness, and if I have any other enemies, I wish they were now here, that I might as surely make friends of them, as I hope to do of you."

"You're a noble young fellow, Master Henry, and so you always were ; the bigger rogue I to sarve you as I did, and keep you so long out of your own. However, listen to me, and I'll set it all to rights now, besides telling you as strange a story about yourself as ever you read of in a printed book. You're sure there's nobody can't hear ? All right and tight ? Very well, then here goes."

From the statement of Gunthorpe, to which we shall add many particulars wherewith he was unacquainted, but which are necessary in order to give the reader a full comprehension of the case, it appeared that Henry was the only son and heir of Cyril Welbeck, the late proprietor of the Manor-house estate, who had been dead nearly twenty years. Previously to his decease, his infant son, then only about two years of age, having been removed from the mansion, to prevent all danger of his catching an infectious fever, with which his sole remaining parent was struggling, resided at a cottage on the banks of Beauley Water, called the Fishing-house, under the care of old Nettle-top, who was a servant of the family, and his wife, who was the child's nurse. At this cottage was kept a small, half-decked pleasure-boat, in which, during the fine days of summer, the 'Squire, as Cyril Welbeck was universally called in those days, was accustomed to sail or row, generally up Beauley, or Southampton-Waters, but sometimes making short excursions along the coast. Barak Gunthorpe, having been a sailor, had the charge of this boat, and was always employed to navigate her during these little trips, acting at other times in the capacity of an under game-keeper. When the 'Squire died, Gideon Welbeck, a distant relation, although the next legal heir to the estate after Henry, came down from London to attend the funeral. At this juncture Gideon, always an expensive and dissolute man, had ruined himself by that fatal propensity to gambling, which his son Godfrey subsequently inherited from him ; a few hundreds were all that remained

to him of a handsome patrimony; he saw no chance of avoiding utter destitution; he was a proud, gloomy man, and the prospect made him desperate.

A few days after the funeral, he went out sailing in the boat with Gunthorpe, when the latter observed, what a pity it was that a gentleman like his honour, who was of an age to enjoy the good things of life, should be kept out of the fine estate to which he was the next heir, by a brat of two years old, who would never know the value of what he lost, if he were to be disposed of at once. Pointing to a small pewter-pot, he added, that if he would fill it with guineas, he would put him in the way of getting rid of the child for ever, without bloodshed, without murder, and almost without risk of any sort. Urged by his necessitous circumstances, and tempted by the splendid bait thus offered to his cupidity, his companion caught easily at the suggestion, and called upon the boatman to explain his plan. Thus encouraged, Gunthorpe observed, that nothing would be so easy as to take the child out with him in the boat any day that it threatened to blow hard, deluding the nurse, who was a simple-minded woman, with some plausible story, and a promise of immediate return; when he would make for the other side of the Isle of Wight, would run ashore, jump out, and turn the boat adrift with her sail set, so as to carry her out to sea. "If she founders, as ten to one she will," added the proposer of this atrocious scheme, "why, it's the wind and the sea have done it, not we; and if she swims, there's no harm done by any body. I shall be off immediately afterward to Newcastle, where I came from; nobody will ever see me again in these parts; it will be concluded that I have gone to Davy's-locker as well as the child, no one will ever be suspected, and in due time your honour will walk into the Manor-house estate as a matter of course."

All this appeared so feasible and so safe to Gideon Welbeck, especially as he was to take no active part in the business, and half deluded himself into the belief that this compassing of the child's death was not equivalent to a direct murder, that he pledged himself to fill the pewter-pot with guineas, if it were brought to him in London after the deed had been accomplished. To avoid all suspicion, he returned immediately to the metropolis, shortly after which, Gunthorpe, watching his opportunity, decoyed the child into the boat, amusing the nurse with the assurance that he was

merely going across the water, and would bring back her little charge in a quarter of an hour. The nurse's husband returning home soon after the boat had left the shore, shouted and made signals to Gunthorpe to put about, pointing to the sky, to indicate the probability of bad weather; but while he was thus employed, a sudden and heavy storm of rain rendered the little bark invisible; Gunthorpe, who was an expert seaman, took advantage of his movements being thus effectually shrouded, ran over to the island, jumped ashore, and set the boat afloat again, with her sail so fixed as that the wind, which was momentarily increasing, must inevitably carry her out to sea. From that day nothing more was ever heard upon the Hampshire coast, either of the boat, or those who were on board it. Nettletope and his wife stated all that they knew of the occurrence; as the storm came on suddenly and heavily, and continued for some time, it was concluded that the boat having been upset by some unfortunate accident, both Gunthorpe and the child had been drowned; and as there was not the smallest suspicion of foul play, and no one to contest the claim of the next legal heir, Gideon Welbeck succeeded in due time to the possession of the Manor-house estate.

But the hapless orphan was not destined to fall a victim to the villains who had thus plotted its destruction. Fortunately for his preservation, the sail was soon blown away by the violence of the wind, and his little ark, though it was driven a considerable way out to sea, still swam upon the troubled waters: Gunthorpe, not knowing how long he himself might be compelled to remain on board, had put some water and provisions in the boat, which afforded sustenance to the child, who crept under the half-deck for shelter, and thus alternately sleeping and waking, and crying itself to sleep again, was at length, after the lapse of a night and a day, picked up at sea by a frigate, commanded by Captain Tenby, then under orders to proceed to Canada with all possible despatch. The child could only speak enough to declare that its name was Henry, and lisp a few words, which were insufficient to afford any clue to its place of residence, the name of its parents, or the cause of its being thus driven out to sea without any companion. Captain Tenby, therefore, bestowed upon him the surname of Melcomb, for no other reason than because he had lately visited that town, which was his birth-place. The singular circumstances

under which the foundling was thus preserved, as well as the remarkable beauty of the boy, deeply interested the Captain, who had no alternative but to carry on his unexpected god-send to Canada. During the voyage the child grew upon his affections, and subsequently took such a firm hold of his heart, that having no family of his own, he adopted and educated him, and finally left him a portion of his fortune as we have already stated.

Though he had not the smallest wish to part with his infant prize, Captain Tenby thought it his duty to have an advertisement inserted in some of the English papers, stating the circumstances under which he had been found, in order that he might be reclaimed by his proper parents, if he possessed any. His first orders to this effect miscarried, the vessel that bore them being captured by the enemy; delays occasioned by professional duty intervened, and it was thus two years before his agent in London procured the advertisement to be inserted, which he did not think it necessary to renew more than once. It met the eye of only one individual who took any interest in the statement, but this one was Gideon Welbeck! From that moment he was racked with a thousand contending agonies. The pangs of remorse that had already begun to tear his heart, received some little alleviation from the hope thus afforded him of his not being a murderer; but if the child survived, it might live to reclaim its patrimony, to strip him of all that he had usurped, to bring him to public shame and punishment, to brand his children with poverty and ignominy. If he were, indeed, a murderer, he was doomed to eternal punishment in the next world; if he were not, he was hourly threatened with exposure and ruin in this. This was the fearful and incessant struggle that had shattered his mind to pieces, and occasionally shaken down his reason from her throne; and these were the misgivings and terrors that led him every day to pore over the advertisements in the newspaper with such a trembling anxiety, wishing, and at the same time dreading, to encounter some fresh statement that might relieve him from the almost intolerable agony of suspense. To these manifold sources of disquiet, were added perpetual fears of Gunthorpe's treachery. Welbeck had sought a miserable solace in the accumulation of riches, and the prospect of aggrandizing his family; his signal failure, as to any diminution of his misery, his bitterness of heart, and the curse,

which, in the exasperation of disappointment, he had pronounced upon his son, we have already recorded. Many vices had he tried, and all had entailed upon his head their own remorseful punishment;—he had practised but one virtue, that of an inflexible integrity in the discharge of his magisterial duties, and this one had not disappointed him. It was an Oasis in the desert of his life, the only sweet drop in the bitter cup of his existence.

Barak Gunthorpe, after he had received in London the promised reward of his villany, and which, according to his own anticipations, was to render him rich and happy for life, had been strictly enjoined by Welbeck to depart immediately for Newcastle. Wishing, however, to have a little sailor's enjoyment before he left London, he betook himself to a favourite haunt at Wapping, where he was robbed of his ill-gotten store by some of the loose women with whom he associated, and being picked up in a state of intoxication by a press-gang, was sent on board the Tender, and transferred to a King's ship bound to Canada. Some time after his arrival, he was drafted on board the frigate commanded by Captain Tenby, where, to his infinite surprise, he saw the child whom he had attempted to destroy, and learned at the same time, from some of the crew, all the particulars of his being picked up at sea. Believing that he was liable to severe, perhaps to capital punishment for the attempt he had made, although it had not fully succeeded, he was very glad that the child did not recognise him, and for his own sake observed a profound silence upon all that had occurred. Having received a somewhat better education than the other men, he was in time made a mate or clerk to the purser, a situation which, notwithstanding frequent punishments for drunkenness, he managed to retain for several years, during which time he had constant opportunities of seeing Henry, who resided a good deal on board, when the frigate was in port or stationed off the coast. Thus he continued until the vessel was ordered to the East Indies, where the Captain died, Gunthorpe, however, still remaining upon that distant station without any means or prospect of returning to Europe. During this time he had written several letters to Welbeck, desiring him to procure his discharge, and send him out money; missives which had multiplied the terrors and sufferings of the party to whom they were addressed, though he was too cautious ever to reply to them. Receiving no an-

swer to his applications, Gunthorpe at length ceased to write, and Welbeck, gladly concluding from his silence that the man was dead, was the more startled and aghast when so fearful an apparition presented itself before him in the hall of his own house, and whispered in his ear, the appalling name of Barak Gunthorpe.

CHAPTER XV.

Open those long shut lips, and strike mine ears
With music more harmonious than the spheres
Yield in their heavenly motions ; and if ever
A true submission for a crime acknowledged
May find a gracious hearing, teach your tongue,
In the first sweet articulate sound it utters,
To sign my wished-for pardon."

THE BONDMAN.

CALX and philosophical as was Henry's usual temperament, and utterly indifferent as he was to riches and grandeur, he could not listen to a recital so strange and interesting in its nature, and which promised to effect such a total alteration in his prospects, without being deeply moved. His predominant source of pleasurable emotion was the reflection that, if his claims to the Manor-house estate should be established, Emily, so far from experiencing any reverse of fortune, or expulsion from her home, might still remain mistress of the mansion, confirming at once her happiness and his own by their marriage ; a measure which, he flattered himself, they both equally desired, although, until the present moment, there had been so little hope of ever realizing their mutual wishes. The most painful feeling that Gunthorpe's intelligence had excited, was the consideration of the disgrace, ejectment, and compulsory restitution which might fall upon Welbeck, for whom, in the forgiving charity of his generous nature, he could not help feeling beforehand a deep commiseration, notwithstanding his atrocious design against his life, and his long usurpation of his estate and fortune. All, however, whether of a gratifying or displeasing nature, depended upon the truth of Gunthorpe's statement,

which he was not prepared to admit, conclusive as it might appear, without farther and most rigorous scrutiny. His close inquiries, however, with the convincing answers they elicited, tended gradually to remove from his mind every possibility of doubt. His informant, mentioning a peculiar mark upon one of Henry's shoulders, referred to old Nettletop or his wife, should either of them be still living, in confirmation of the fact, that the infant of which they had charge bore a similar impression. The clothes and ornamented coral which he wore at the time of his exposure, as well as the boat in which he was turned adrift, were so minutely described, and tallied so exactly with the information which he himself remembered to have often received from Captain Tenby,—the whole detail of direct and circumstantial evidence was so consistent, clear, and irrefragable, that he remained under the perfect conviction of his being the rightful owner of the Manor-house estate, and entitled, as such, to all the rents of his long minority.

Satisfied upon this point—and he was one of those whose conscience is so delicate that they always argue against, rather than in favour of themselves, he again gave his hand to Gunthorpe, in token of his full and free forgiveness, and assuring him that he should be abundantly rewarded for his intelligence, he took his address at Southampton, and dismissed him from the prison, cautioning him not to breathe a syllable of what had occurred, and to live as secluded as possible, lest he should be recognised and brought into trouble. Again left to his own meditations, Henry had leisure to reflect upon this singular alteration in his destiny, and upon the measures which it would be most expedient to take for the recovery of his own rights, with the least possible injury to the feelings of others. Welbeck, he thought it not unlikely, rendered desperate by the imminency of his danger, might indignantly deny the whole statement of his accomplice, and drive him to the necessity of legal proceedings, for which he was totally unprovided with funds. If he could have access to him or to Emily, some compromise might, perhaps, be arranged; but, unfortunately, in the midst of all the golden visions which Gunthorpe had so suddenly conjured up, he was imprisoned for a heavy debt, had only a few guineas in his pocket, and did not know where to apply for pecuniary aid, unless to Penguin or Mrs. Tenby, upon each of whom he considered himself to have some sort of claim.

The individuals mentioned were at that moment sitting in discussion together upon his case, and both found themselves to be most unluckily circumstanced. It is really astonishing what benevolent actions people would do if they followed their alleged inclinations, and did not rather choose to be governed by their real ones. Mrs. Tenby, for instance, if we may credit her own averment, would have been delighted to assist in liberating Henry, her regard for whom no one could for a moment question, but that, when she reflected how he had suffered himself to be wheedled and fooled out of the whole of his ready money in a few months, she thought it right to let him lie in prison and bite the bridle, that it might operate as a salutary lesson for his future conduct. Penguin, too, would have been truly gratified to liberate Henry, whose claim upon him to a certain extent, and under all the circumstances of the case, he was quite prepared to admit ; but upon first learning his wife's infamous conduct, he had sworn never to pay any of her debts, and having always been a conscientious man, he could not think of violating so solemn an asseveration. With this determination the parties separated, having both pointedly condemned Henry's imprudence, and paid one another several well-turned compliments upon their own discretion, uprightness, and strict regard to truth, duty, and principle !

The prisoner would, indeed, have found some difficulty in devising the means of extrication, had he not at this juncture received a most seasonable visit from Enoch Clayton, the young American friend whom he had liberated from the Fleet-prison, and who, having received his expected remittances from his own country, hastened into Hampshire to cancel his debt with Henry, and renew the expression of his gratitude. Not less grieved than astonished at learning his imprisonment, he lost not a moment in flying to Southampton, where he enjoyed the inexpressible satisfaction of returning the service he had received by setting his friend at liberty.

Previously to this most opportune arrival, Henry had been arranging in his own mind a scheme whereby the restoration of his rights, and the accomplishment, as he trusted, of his permanent happiness, might be effected, without any public exposure of Welbeck, or any of the pain and disgrace which such an occurrence must inevitably entail upon Emily. Animated with these benevolent views, he employed the first

moments of his freedom in proceeding to the Manor-house, where he learned that Welbeck was confined to his bed by illness, and that his daughter, in close attendance upon him, had desired she might not be interrupted by any visitors. Upon his stating, however, that he had matter of the most urgent and important nature to communicate to her, old Wiverley, undertaking to procure him an interview unknown to the Justice, who had strictly forbidden his being received, inducted him to the parlour, where he was shortly joined by Emily, whose eyes, though they betrayed that she had lately been weeping, were lighted up with a gleam of pleasure, as she exclaimed, "I am glad—delighted to see you again at liberty, Mr. Melcomb! I have a full confidence in your innocence of all the charges that have been brought against you; you will ever possess the esteem, the regard, the gratitude, that are due to you for—Oh, Sir! how shall I ever sufficiently thank you for your brave, your magnanimous conduct in the Forest, when I was left exposed to that terrible wild beast? Indeed, indeed, Sir, my heart thanks you; it will never forget you: but I implore you to recollect that our interviews are forbidden. My poor father is already distressingly ill, I must not irritate him by disobedience; nothing, nothing in the world but my duty to him would lay me under the painful necessity of declaring that I must not follow my own—that I ought not, can not listen to the communication you have to make!"

"But, if your filial duty imperatively demands that you should hear me; if the character, the preservation of your father, if his happiness, and yours, and mine, entirely depend—which I can most solemnly assure you to be the fact—upon the important statement that I am now compelled to make, you will not, I am confident, deny me a patient hearing. You are agitated, Miss Welbeck: I beseech you to be composed, to dismiss every apprehension. I may bear strange and heavy tidings, but I come, nevertheless, as the messenger of peace, consolation, and good-will. It is my painful duty to acquaint you with facts that may lacerate, may harrow your feelings in the ~~acute~~ acute manner; and I therefore hasten to apprise you beforehand, that I bring balm and healing for the wounds I am necessitated to inflict; that if my proposition be entertained, nothing of what I am now about to communicate need ever transpire, that no alterations of any sort will be requisite, but that peace of mind may probably

be restored to your father, while your happiness and mine, if my hopes do not deceive me, may be ensured for life. Bear this in mind, I implore you, while you listen, discarding all alarm, and as far as possible every unpleasant feeling, in the sure confidence that these, my previous pledges, shall be fully redeemed, and that the calamity which, at the first view, may seem to threaten both your father and yourself, may, by your and his co-operation, be eventually converted into a blessing for all parties."

After thus preparing his auditors for the startling communication he was to make, and for the painful trial to which it might expose her, he proceeded to recite the whole of Gunthorpe's statement, recapitulating all the minute circumstances of corroboration, which left not a shadow of doubt upon his own mind of his being the rightful heir of Cyril Welbeck, and entitled, as such, to the Manor-house estate. "And now, Miss Welbeck," continued Henry, "having gone through this distressing part of my recital, to which I shall never again make the most remote allusion, I would humbly submit to your consideration my scheme for hushing up the whole affair, and extracting solace and joy out of these apparent elements of misery. If I might flatter myself with the belief that I am not indifferent to you, that you would have sufficient confidence in me to honour me with your hand, and make me the guardian of your happiness for life, I should apprehend little difficulty in obtaining your father's consent to our marriage. As a pauper and an unknown foundling, it is not strange that he should object to me for a son-in-law; but I shall now possess the means of enabling you to move in a becoming sphere, and I am no longer an outcast as to kindred, but of the same family as himself, although our relationship is a distant one. If he yield to my wishes, nothing whatever need transpire. In giving me his daughter, he will have made ample atonement for all the wrongs he may have done me; and when I assume the name of Welbeck, to which I am entitled, it will naturally be concluded that it was one of the conditions upon which he consented to the marriage, and will thus excite neither surprise nor inquiry. We may live together in the Manor-house as one family; I shall be happy to divide with you the duty of filial attention, of endeavouring to make your father's future years better and happier than those that are past; and when, in the course of time, he shall be removed from among us, it may appear that I have succeeded

to the estate as the husband of his daughter—for he is well known to have disinherited your brother Godfrey, and thus no exposure or humiliation will be inflicted upon your father, no consequent misery of feeling will be entailed upon yourself, and no slur or ignominy will be cast upon our family name, of which I myself have now a right to become jealous; and am therefore consulting my own feelings not less than yours and Mr. Welbeck's, by the arrangement I propose. You must allow me one more observation. Let it be distinctly understood, that I come not to extort a consent to my proposition under any threat of consequences; I dictate nothing; I prescribe nothing; I present myself as an humble suitor, and happy indeed shall I be if, in obtaining the sole object of my wishes, I can spare the feelings, and uphold the respectability of the family into which I solicit an admission."

During this agitating recital, Emily had at times been so powerfully affected as to be on the verge of fainting away, and more than once was Henry compelled to suspend his narrative, that, by his tender attentions, he might encourage and console her. "Let me know all; let me know the worst," she repeatedly exclaimed, as she urged him to resume; "I have long been tortured with misgivings and suspicions; anything is better than suspense. Go on, go on! I have courage to hear it all!" When he had concluded, however, and had developed the full extent of his benevolent scheme, she was so moved and overcome that she burst into tears and sobbed audibly. As soon as she could recover herself, she held out her hand to Henry, exclaiming at the same time in a voice that trembled with tenderness and deep emotion, "Oh, Mr. Melcomb! I was ever too sensitive, too-ingenuous, too little accustomed to pleasure of any sort, to be able to conceal the delight that I always found in your society, and I fear, therefore, that I have long since betrayed the secret of my soul. If this was the case before, what must be my feelings now, after the truly considerate, the delicate, the noble, and generous proposal you have just made! Oh! that you could read my heart, that you might see how truly, how gratefully it is yours!"

"Enough, enough! I read it in your affectionate and confiding looks!" cried Henry, pressing to his lips the hand which he had still retained.

"But my father, my poor father!" said the blushing and confused Emily; "every thing must be made dependent upon

his consent, though of that there can now be little doubt. Alas! this will be a trying day for him. He has been seriously ill, and sadly wandering in his faculties ever since the morning when the strange man, whom I now discover to have been Barak Gunthorpe, was closeted with him in the porch-room. Such have been my fears for the permanent sanity of his mind, that, with the consent of his medical attendant, I am about to hazard the experiment of attempting to recall him to his self-possession by powerfully exciting his feelings. This I hope to accomplish by effecting his reconciliation with my unfortunate brother, whose melancholy story you have probably heard. He is now in the house for this purpose, and I must hasten to execute my plan."

"But my own, my dearest Emily—for such I hope I may now be allowed to call you," said Henry—"can you not stay with me a few minutes longer? I have much, much to say."

"Not now, not now. Godfrey is waiting, and I have been too long absent from my father. I dread to think of what I have to perform in communicating to him the statement of the wretched Gunthorpe. But it must—it must be done, and I will not flinch from my duty, distressing as it may be. I need not now give you permission to repeat your visit, for it is we who are the intruders, since the Manor-house and all that it contains are yours."

"Long may such intruders continue in it, for I desire to call nothing mine unless I may possess yourself."

"Adieu! adieu! kindest, best, most generous of men!" and the blushing girl hurried out of the room.

Although Welbeck, by a powerful effort over his mind, had restrained its fierce workings during his colloquy with Barak Gunthorpe, the seeming composure he had thus attained was but of temporary endurance. His intellects, frequently in a wavering state, had received a shock, which at times completely deranged them; and his body, participating in the disorder of his faculties, had become so weakened and unnerved, that he had only been able to rise from his bed at intervals since he had been thus scared by the unexpected apparition of his accomplice. Before Emily returned to him, after her conversation with Henry, she remained for a short while taking anxious counsel with her own thoughts, whether she should first try her intended experiment for effecting a reconciliation between her father and her brother,

or at once communicate the intelligence of Gunthorpe's confession. Alarming as the latter might appear, she thought that, by preparing him for it by a previous declaration of Henry's forgiveness and oblivion of the past, and his generous proposition for ensuring the future happiness of all parties, she was not unlikely to soften and tranquillize his mind, and thus the better prepare him for extending his pardon to Godfrey, and again receiving him into favour. Upon this course she finally resolved, and returned accordingly to his room, where she found him dressed and lying upon the bed, apparently exhausted with the effort of putting on his clothes, and suffering under a total prostration of spirits, although his mind was in a lucid state. "That is my darling Emy," said the old man in a feeble voice, "I know it is she by her entering so softly, and treading so lightly. Nobody else moves about me so gently. Why should they? Nobody else cares for me." He groaned deeply, and after remaining for a minute or two plunged in melancholy, remorseful thoughts, continued, "Come to me, my child, let me see thee, let me embrace thee, for thou art now the only comfort left to me upon earth."

"Say not so, my dearest father, I trust that there are many joys, and many, many years in reserve for you, much happier than those you have latterly experienced. Cheer up! cheer up! let us all rejoice together, for I have great and wonderful tidings to tell you, tidings which, while they promise a perpetual peace to our hearts, should fill them with everlasting gratitude to God."

In this strain did she continue for a brief space, endeavouring to inspire her father with a perfect confidence that all his dangers and troubles were over, before she would venture to communicate her intelligence; and then cautiously and gradually, not without frequently renewed assurances of forgiveness, solace, and happiness to all parties, did she proceed to relate what she had heard. With the true delicacy and tact of a woman and a daughter, she made not the most remote allusion to her father's participation in the meditated atrocity, but told her story as if she herself believed it to have been devised and executed by Gunthorpe alone. As soon as she began to mention this man's name, Welbeck sat suddenly up in the bed, and riveting his distended, wild-looking eyes upon his daughter, listened to her with open mouth and flushed features, while his hands rapidly,

though involuntarily, opened and shut in the intense eagerness of his expectation. Not once did he attempt to interrupt her narrative, but as his conscience smote him, as he saw, in spite of her affectionate reserve and suppression of the fact, that his guilt had been divulged, his face became frightfully convulsed, he hid it in his hands, he buried it in the pillow, he shuddered, and endeavouring to shrink into himself, uttered the most appalling groans in the deep agony of his spirit.

When, however, Emily proceeded to state how Henry had been saved and picked up at sea, and that he was the identical Henry Melcomb, from whose society her father had lately derived so much pleasure, Welbeck's debility seemed instantaneously to have left him, he sprang upon his knees, clasped his hands together, and cried aloud, in a vehement and impassioned voice, "Then I am not a murderer! Thank God! thank God! thank God! Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" and he fell back upon his pillow, struggling with the hysterical violence of his emotions.

This shattering attack again producing a temporary alienation of his mind, he talked for some time wildly and incoherently, imagining himself to be publicly arraigned for murder, and imploring abjectly and with tears the mercy of his judge. Emily suffered him to weep without interruption, knowing by experience that it generally soothed his agitation; nor was she now mistaken, for he shortly became more calm, and after slowly communing with his thoughts, as if to recover his recollection, he exclaimed, with a look and tone of incertitude—"Saved! saved! did not some one tell me that the boy was saved?"

"Yes, he is saved! we are all saved, all forgiven, all happy!" cried Emily, tenderly embracing her father, at whose instance she then recapitulated the circumstances of Henry's preservation, together with the whole train of minute and irrefutable evidence that established his identity, Welbeck repeatedly exclaiming during the recital, "The finger of Heaven! the finger of Heaven! It is manifest, indisputable! I acknowledge and confess all! Yes, yes," he ejaculated, when she had concluded this portion of her statement, "Providence has snatched him from the stormy deep, and fostered him, and sent him hither, on purpose that I might be brought to shame and disgrace. But I care not, I care not, for I am not a murderer. The demon who has so long

been sitting on my heart, tearing and mangling, and devouring it piecemeal, has been driven away. I feel that he has gone; my bosom shall no longer be a nest for scorpions. Kiss me, my child, kiss me; thy father is not quite so guilty a wretch as he thought himself. But where is Henry, where is he, that I may throw myself at his feet, acknowledge my transgressions, tender him full restitution, and implore his pardon?"

"He will not have restitution, he does not require pardon," cried the blushing and weeping Emily; "he comes as a suitor for your favour, and solicits from you only one poor boon, which, worthless and utterly inadequate as it is, the generous man is willing to receive as a full acquittance of all that you may owe him,—as an act of pardon and oblivion for the past, a pledge of friendship, concord, security, and happiness for the future."

She now detailed Henry's proposal for making the restoration of his rights and paternal name appear to emanate from her father as a condition of the marriage with his daughter, and as a certain means of preserving Welbeck himself from all shame and exposure. Confessing that she had already bestowed her heart upon Henry, she besought him to consent to this arrangement, drawing a glowing picture of the felicity she hoped to enjoy, when herself and Henry, living under the same roof with their common father, might share the duty and the pleasure of ministering to his comfort, and restoring his long-lost peace of mind."

"Generous, glorious, god-like boy!" was all that Welbeck could for some time articulate. "Consent!" he at length continued, "it is not for me to consent, but to implore, to supplicate, to pray him upon my knees to carry into execution what his benevolent, his magnanimous soul has suggested! Oh God! how wonderfully am I spared, and how little have I deserved these mercies!"

"We may well deserve the favour of Heaven, my dear father, if we repent our misdeeds, and extend to others the forgiveness we have ourselves received. This should be a day of joy and pardon, of peace-making and reconciliation to all parties. Bear this in mind, I implore you: I will leave you now, for you heed me not, nor do I wish to interrupt you while thus devoutly employed."

Welbeck having sunk down with clasped hands beside the bed, was praying with a passionate but incoherent energy,

returning thanks for his own escape, invoking blessings upon Henry, and then wandering into deprecations of the curse that fell upon the head of Cain, the first murderer, to whom he compared himself, and with whose brand and punishment he expected to be visited. Emily softly withdrew from the apartment, hoping that prayer, solitude, and his own reflections, upon the heart-healing intelligence she had conveyed, would do more to tranquillize his mind, than any solace she might herself suggest to him. Determined, however, not to lose so favourable an opportunity, when his spirit was humbled and softened, for attempting to reconcile him to her brother, she returned, after the lapse of half an hour, Godfrey following her in silence into the apartment, and concealing himself behind a large screen, placed between the door and the bed.

Welbeck was now again lying down, talking to himself aloud, apparently in a mood of tolerable complacency, although his soliloquy was exclamatory and disconnected.

"I told you, my dear father," said Emily, taking his hand, as she placed herself beside him, "that this ought to be a day of pardon to all parties, and now I am come to ask forgiveness for myself in disobeying your positive injunctions, and venturing to speak to you upon the subject of our unhappy Godfrey."

The very name of his son, associated, as it had long been in Welbeck's mind, with the bitterness that springs from disappointed hopes and vainly lavished affections, seemed suddenly to have thrown him back into his former state of passionate excitement, and to have revived all the rancour and fury of his soul.

"Hah!" he exclaimed, starting up, and stretching out his clenched hands—"have you dared again to mention to me the wretch whom I have cursed! His very name stings my ear! Hear me, child! hear me!" and he clasped his hands convulsively above his head: "Once already has my malediction alighted upon him, and now again do I solemnly pronounce——"

"My father! my father! curse me not a second time," shouted Godfrey, as bursting from his place of concealment, he threw himself upon the bed, when Welbeck, uttering a loud cry of terror and surprise, fell back upon the pillow, overtaken by one of those fits to which he was liable upon any great or sudden emotion. His afflicted children sat

beside him, watching his recovery with the most intent anxiety, especially as the present access was of longer duration than usual, but he at length opened his eyes, faintly exclaiming, "Methought I heard the voice, and saw the face, of my poor unfortunate boy!"

"You did! you did! I am here, Sir, here," cried Godfrey, kneeling before him. "Your prodigal, but penitent son, is come to throw himself at your feet, to implore your pardon, and to promise an amended life for the future."

"Are you indeed my son?" cried Welbeck, placing his hands upon the shoulders of the kneeling suppliant, and gazing upon his face with an earnest, but bewildered scrutiny:—"Are you truly, and indeed my own darling boy; the little blue-eyed Godfrey, on whom I doted so fondly when a child? Are you the prattling innocent whom I once delighted to dance upon my knee, and to sing to, and play with during the day, and to kiss every night in your cradle before I retired to rest? Are you the poor, suffering, sick Godfrey, whom I carried in my arms early and late, when you had a fever, and hushed you to sleep, and watched beside you till you awoke again?"

For a moment or two he remained silent, still poring upon every feature of the face before him, until, as his consciousness returned, and a conviction of Godfrey's identity became established in his mind, the muscles of his mouth began to be slightly convulsed, the blood rushed over his countenance, his eyes glistened, he drew two or three deep and gasping inspirations, the tears rolled rapidly down his cheeks, and suddenly clasping and holding Godfrey to his heart, he hung tenderly over him, passionately sobbing, "My child! my child! my child!"

"My father! my dear father!" was all that the son could articulate, when his voice was choked by his emotions, as he wept in his parent's bosom. Emily, utterly overcome by this touching scene, sobbed aloud, and tried in vain to wipe away the delicious tears of sympathy, joy, and deep tenderness, which streamed so copiously from her eyes, as to prevent her discerning her father and her brother, while they remained thus fondly locked together in the embrace of reconciliation.

"Yes!" exclaimed Welbeck, at length disengaging himself from his son, and surveying him with a look of paternal fondness, "I see it, I feel it now;—you are very pale, and

very thin, but you are still my own, own Godfrey. There are your dear mother's blue eyes ; there—" At the recollection of his deceased wife, his voice broke, the tears gushed afresh from his eyes, he was unable to proceed, but after giving a free vent to his emotions, he recovered himself, and stretching both his hands upwards, passionately exclaimed, " Oh, my departed Sarah,—now a saint in Heaven ! had I followed your pure and holy counsels, I should never have deviated into sin and misery, never have known the racking remorse of the past, nor the deep anguish of my present humiliation. Look down upon your guilty and wretched husband ; intercede for me at the Throne of Mercy, and join with me in prayer, that this dizzy ferment of my brain may not end in madness, for I fear that I am already sometimes bewildered and wandering in my mind. These are your children ; hover over them, and protect them ; for their father, even if he preserved his wits, is a criminal, not fit to be their guardian, and still less their guide ! "

Deeply affected as were both Emily and Godfrey by this fervent invocation of their mother, they dried up their tears, devoting all their efforts to the consolation of their remaining parent, whom they again affectionately embraced, imploring him not to agitate himself with unavailing regret for the past, but to look forward with hope, confidence, and gratitude. " I should not have ventured into your presence, nor have presumed to implore your pardon," said Godfrey, anxious that his father should not any longer dwell upon the recollection of such painful subjects—" unless I could present myself before you in a less culpable light than that in which you have lately viewed me. You will, I am sure, share in my delight, when I tell you that the villains who fabricated a charge of forgery against me, have been convicted of a conspiracy ; and that I have obtained a full and total annulment of the marriage with the profligate woman, who, under a feigned name, inveigled me into the contract. The mischief of my follies and irregularities is thus, in a considerable degree, remedied ; the good that may be derived from them in the way of warning remains, I trust, to be evinced in an amended life, and an avoidance of all future reproach. I have suffered too acutely not to be sincere in my resolution of reform, and it is upon this ground that I most earnestly and humbly implore your forgiveness."

" Take it freely, my son, and my blessing with it ; if a bless-

ing from such a wretch as I am, may do thee good. *Em* brace me, Godfrey—again, again—bless^h thee! bless thee, my poor boy! Monster that I am! did I not curse thee? I must have been mad when I did it. Was it for a hoary transgressor like me to call for vengeance upon a poor, misguided youth? This, too, must be added to the catalogue of my offences. Forgive me! forgive me, O God!"

"Forgiveness and blessings seem already to be showered upon all our heads," said Emily. "Godfrey, cleared of the aspersions that were cast upon him, liberated from his disreputable wife, and promising to be a wiser and a happier man for the future, is restored to your favour and affections. I, myself, am about to be united to the most amiable of mankind, and the only being in the world, who, in securing my happiness, could consolidate that of my father and my brother. And you, my dear Sir, relieved from all those remorseful apprehensions that have saddened your latter days, and continuing to reside at the Manor-house, will, in addition to the domestic enjoyments which it will be the study of myself and Godfrey to provide for you, be solaced with the society and attentions of our generous Henry, in whose company you have already found a pleasure that must have attached him to your heart."

"It is too much! It is too much!" cried Welbeck. "Such a flood of joy is more than I deserve, more than I can bear: my head is already confused and giddy. Kneel with me, my dear children, while my faculties are still spared, and let us all return thanks for the undeserved mercies—unmerited, at least, by me—which Heaven has been pleased to shower upon us."

CONCLUSION.

These and thy virtue
Keep thy fame ever odoriferous !
While the great, proud, rich, undeserving man,
Alive, stinks in his vices, and, being vanished,
The golden calf that was an idol, decked
With marble pillars, jet, and porphyry,
Shall quickly, both in bone and name consume,
Though wrapt in lead, spice, searcloth, and perfume.

MASSINGER.

THE joy of unexpected deliverance from any long impending danger or calamity, is more trying to the faculties than would be the actual occurrence of the anticipated visitation ; a truth which Welbeck was now destined to exemplify, for during the remainder of this most anxious day he was in a state of total delirium. Being again restored to his proper senses by a night's repose, he was permitted, at his own urgent request, to have an interview with Henry. It proved a deeply affecting one to both parties ; for the sick man, in the utter prostration of his mind, confessed his guilt with the most passionate expressions of self-accusing penitence and remorse, and implored forgiveness in such agony of soul, that his visitant, who could hardly prevent the gray-headed old man from kneeling at his feet, was scarcely less distressed than the suppliant himself. Taking his hand, however, and laying it upon his heart, Henry solemnly pronounced his forgiveness and oblivion of the past, again pledging himself to the full performance of all that he had stated to Emily, and urging, in the kindest and most delicate manner, every topic of consolation that was likely to sooth the mind of his companion. Fairly at a loss for words to express his sense of all this unparalleled forbearance and generosity, Welbeck could only weep his gratitude ; but when his companion arose to depart, the fear that some new turn of fate might prevent the realization of all these beatific visions, again restored to him his speech, and with an eager impatience, he implored Henry not to lose time in accomplishing the great and glorious work on which their common happiness depended, but to name an early day for the mar-

riage. Upon this point, however anxious Henry might be to meet the wishes of his future father-in-law, he would not presume to dictate, leaving that, and every other matter of detail, to be arranged between Emily and her parent.

No sooner had Henry taken his departure, than Welbeck called impatiently for his boy, his beloved Godfrey. In the oscillation of his disordered mind, his feelings swung rapidly from one extremity to another, and he was now as doting in his restored fondness for his son, as he had lately been rancorous and implacable in his aversion. It seemed as if he wished to lavish upon him at once all the long arrears of his interrupted love; he could scarcely bear him to be out of his sight; he dwelt frequently, and seldom without tears, as he embraced him afresh, upon his paleness, his altered looks, and the lameness that still compelled him to go upon crutches; and the presence of the son certainly seemed to have a beneficial effect in preserving the sanity of the father, if that, indeed, can be called sanity which now began to degenerate into a fond, maudlin imbecility. Under these circumstances, Godfrey found no difficulty in procuring his consent to his marriage with Mary Boulderson. "My consent!" cried the old man, "what right have I to grant or to withhold it? My poor boy! I have nothing to leave you; no estate, no fortune, nothing but my blessing, for all that I possess belongs to Henry. Apply not then to me, but to the magnanimous friend upon whom we are all dependent."

When informed that Henry was most anxious for the match in question, Welbeck became equally solicitous for its completion, appearing to be particularly gratified at the thought that his son and daughter might now be married on the same day. Sanctioned in his choice by his father's consent; cleared in his character; once more a single man, and able to explain all that had appeared equivocal or suspicious in his conduct, more especially as to his mysterious meetings with his sister in the Forest, Godfrey hurried in search of his beloved Mary, to relate the altered circumstances in which he was now placed, and make atonement for his former vacillation, by an immediate offer of his hand.

At this period Lawrence Boulderson had accomplished that which he had sworn to perform, he had run ashore without loss the remainder of the Longsplice's cargo, an event which his daughter had been expecting with the most intense anxiety, since his final abandonment of the free-trade

was to be the result of his success in this enterprise. Having accomplished this object, he made an immediate arrangement with one of his partners for taking his remaining share of the smuggling stock, as he was now about to abandon the free-trade ; and when Godfrey arrived at the Grange-farm, he found both the father and daughter in busy preparation for their early removal to Southampton.

After frankly stating to Mary every particular of his own wild and foolish career, the occasion of his secret meetings with Emily, his imprudent marriage, and the alternate hopes and fears that imparted to his conduct such an appearance of inconsistency, Godfrey added, " And now, Mary, having thus unreservedly told you my whole history, it is right to apprise you, that, although I am the only son of Gideon Welbeck, and he may approve the object of my choice when I solicit you to become my wife, you will, if you marry me, in all probability have a pauper for your husband. My father has revoked the curse he pronounced against me, nay, he is fully reconciled ; and yet, from peculiar circumstances, it is not likely that he can ever benefit me by his will. I am finally and irrevocably disinherited. That I may be assisted by Emily or by her husband is not improbable ; but I am a mere dependant on their bounty. Unfortunately, I am not only likely to be a pauper, but a cripple for life ; for in my too hasty removal from Hordle Cliff, and subsequently from the Farm, I again displaced one of the bones, although I was not aware of it. My concealment in the Forest prevented any inspection of my leg until the evil was beyond remedy. If you will take compassion on me, Mary, and receive me for your husband, penniless and lame, but penitent and reformed, I will endeavour, by a respectable, and, I hope, a useful course of life hereafter, to prove myself worthy your love, and to make some atonement to society for the errors of my past career."

" There is my hand," said Mary, extending it to him with a look and tone of frank, honest delight ; " but I would not give it you, if I thought you would ever swerve from this honourable resolution. I always knew you to be generous, brave, and accomplished ; and now that you have explained the seeming mystery of your actions, and accounted for that wavering and irresolution which excited at the time my contempt, I disdain to conceal—Psha !—surely, George, (I shall never be able to call you Godfrey,) surely you must long ago

have discovered my partiality, and I am no silly coquet to deny it now. Honesty in word and action, is my motto. A pauper ! Have you not talents which, by the assistance of your friends—now not ashamed to acknowledge you, may always command the means of honourable subsistence ; and has not my father declared that he has enough for us all ? A cripple ! I hope your fears are groundless ; but should they be realized—O George ! George ! will not that very circumstance constitute your best title to my hand and heart ? Can I ever be wearied of nursing you ; can I ever contemplate your misfortune without additional gratitude and love, when I reflect that it was entailed upon you by your brave and generous interference to protect my father ?—Here he comes, and I think I may venture to promise that he will not like you the less for having the stronger claim upon his friendship.”

“ Well, lad, what cheer ? what cheer ? ” cried the Captain, saluting him with his usual rough and cordial greeting. “ What ! ” he indignantly continued, when Mary stated her lover’s apprehensions—“ Do you fancy I agreed to have you because you were old Welbeck’s son ? If you think so, you think a lie ! Don’t care a rope’s-end about his fortune, nor yours neither !—’cause why ?—got enough of my own to keep us all right and tight. Polly cast you off, ’cause you’re likely to be lopsided for life, and that too from a bit of lead you took in your body when it was meant for mine ! Start my timbers ! if she did, I’d cast her off, and never take her in tow again ! Poll’s not a sneaking, greedy, snivelling, lying, false-hearted slut, but a brave, honest girl : and as for Larry Boulderson, when a man has once done me a good turn, I’m always willing to go through fire and water to serve him !—Vast there ! vast ! I want none of your thanks ; I hate jaw and palaver, and don’t like to see folks standing shilly-shally, when every thing’s settled,—’cause why ?—didn’t like it myself when I was a young one ; so the sooner you’re spliced to Polly, why the better I shall be pleased, and so will you, I warrant.”

All parties being thus equally solicitous to expedite the ceremony, Thaxted and its vicinity were astounded by the intelligence that Emily Welbeck and Henry Melcomb, who was thenceforward to take the name of his wife, were shortly to be married in the parish church ; that on the same day Godfrey Welbeck was to be united to Mary Boulderson, the daughter of “ the Capt’n ; ” and most astonishing of all, that

his Worship, Justice Welbeck, who was now getting better in his health, perfectly approving the marriage both of his son and of his daughter, meant to sanction the double ceremony by his presence. The amazement, the conjectures, the whispering, the surmises, the gossipings, and the curiosity which this news excited throughout the whole rural district of Thaxted, must be left to the imagination of the reader, for they utterly transcend all power of description. Mr. Penguin, with whom Henry had sought a reconciliation immediately after his liberation from prison, had now become prodigiously intimate with his "young Domine," as he again familiarly termed him, and running about from house to house, circulated the marvellous tidings in all directions, clearing his friend from the aspersions that had been heaped upon him, extolling him to the skies as a phoenix of perfection, and again reclaiming that distant consanguinity between them, which he had latterly been so forward to deny, and for which, in point of fact, there was no ground whatever.

On the morning of the ceremony, Thaxted church was so thronged with visitants, that it was not without difficulty the nuptial party could make their way to the altar, where they mutually pledged those vows which neither of the four individuals ever found subsequent reason to repent. Justice Welbeck was present, and notwithstanding the unwonted smiles which on this happy occasion lighted up his haggard features, it was observed by all that his recent illness had sadly altered him, while several prognosticated that it would not be many months before the Manor-house would find a new owner. At his particular request, there was no parade of any sort, every thing being conducted in the most simple and unostentatious manner, so that we have no splendid dresses to record, no festivities to commemorate, no procession to particularize, nothing to state beyond the bare fact, that after the ceremony, Godfrey and Mary set off for Southampton, where it was their purpose to pass the honeymoon, while Henry and Emily took up their permanent abode at the Manor-house.

Never, perhaps, had two such universally interesting marriages been celebrated, on the same morning, in the little church of Thaxted; and scarcely had a fortnight elapsed, when another concourse of curious spectators were assembled in the same sacred building to witness the nuptials of Fanny Frampton and Frank Ringwood. From the moment when

Fanny had first declared her resolution, she had adhered to it with an inflexible firmness, that might have been deemed foreign to her usually sportive, pliable, and apparently volatile temperament. There was, in fact, considerable strength of character, perhaps an almost undue degree of self-will, united with her playfulness of manner and childishness of appearance; so that her parents, finding menaces and entreaties equally inefficacious, were fain to let her follow her own course, warning her, that they would neither recognise the match beforehand, nor ever notice her after it had taken place. By the kind and zealous interference, however, of Doctor and Miss Dotterel—the former of whom, with his usual amiable inconsistency, loudly condemned Fanny's conduct, and yet earnestly strove to propitiate her parents—Mr. Frampton was persuaded to be present at the ceremony, and to give his daughter away, only marking his disapprobation of her nuptials by refusing to bestow upon her any marriage portion. Inexorable to the last, Lady Susan told her, as she set out for the church, that she must never expect to set foot again within Oakham-hall, or to have any farther communication with her mother, paying herself, at the same time, a few compliments upon the exemplary manner in which she had always discharged the maternal duties, and reproaching her daughter with the consequent aggravation of her ingratitude. Augusta wrote a long letter to her sister, sincerely regretting the degradation she had brought upon herself and her family by her alliance with Farmer Ringwood, declaring that although she herself had a particular objection to Lord Mossdale, and could, therefore, never have married him, (an assertion which we beg leave to discredit,) she thought Fanny's refusal of him a great piece of folly and presumption; concluding with stating, that as the writer held implicit obedience to parents an imperative duty, she must decline any future communication with the wife of Farmer Ringwood, although she should ever remain, "her affectionate sister, Augusta Frampton."

Mr. Frampton had a much more valid reason than the ostensible one of dissatisfaction at Fanny's marriage, for refusing her a portion. In spite of his great reputed wealth, his finances were by no means in a condition to authorize an advance of money for this, or for any other purpose. A large estate, which he had formerly purchased with a defective title, had been wrested from him by a decree in the Court

of Chancery, after a long and most ruinous suit ; an unprincipled agent in the West Indies, had not only materially injured the property intrusted to his management, but finally decamped many thousand pounds in debt to his employer ; a succession of unfavourable seasons had considerably reduced Frampton's income : pride, or perhaps the hope of better times, prevented any reduction in his large expenditure ; and under these circumstances, a very few years, as might well have been expected, produced an irretrievable derangement of his affairs. His embarrassments could no longer be concealed ; Oakham-hall was brought to the hammer, a small house was substituted for the large mansion in London, and his expensive establishment was slowly and most reluctantly reduced, to meet the altered state of his circumstances. Galled, humiliated, stung to the quick by reverses which fell with aggravated force upon a family so proud and arrogant, the Framptons rendered their misfortunes still more poignant, by refusing to submit to them with a good grace. Subterfuges and expedients of all kinds were resorted to, for the purpose of palliating disasters which could not be altogether denied, and in their efforts to maintain an establishment which, although much reduced, was still incommensurate with their narrow means, they offered to the world the pitiful but scarcely pitiable spectacle of impoverished pride, half starving self, servants, and horses, for the sake of an occasional ostentatious dinner ; sacrificing every-day comforts for one or two showy luxuries ; surrendering realities in order to keep up appearances ; and compelled to be pinching and penurious at home, and to endure all the domestic miseries inseparable from a sordidly conducted household, for the sorry and poor satisfaction of being thought happier and richer than they really were.

As there was little chance, in the humbler sphere they were now compelled to occupy, of realizing the long-desired noble alliance for Augusta, her mother thought proper to disavow her having ever entertained any such project, treating the whole story as the malicious fabrication of some enemy of the family, and adding, that she desired nothing more, although her own noble connexions might well justify her in seeking a loftier alliance for her daughter, than to see her united to some respectable and worthy commoner, with whom she might share that domestic happiness which she was so eminently qualified to bestow. Modest as was the

hint, and reasonable as might be deemed the expectation, the desiderated, respectable, and worthy commoner came not forward; and at the period when this history was written, Miss Frampton still studiously, though now most economically, attentive to the fluctuations of fashion; stately as ever in look and in demeanour, though now, alas! the splendour of her youthful beauty had much faded away, remained unmarried,—a condition which her feelings of bitter disappointment, and the aggravated infirmity of her temper, will, we fear, hardly allow us to term, in this instance, a state of single blessedness.

Brook-hatch, the residence of Fanny and Ringwood, was a scene of genuine festivity at the time of their marriage, and remained ever afterward the abode of perfect domestic happiness. Its mistress, whose girlishness of appearance, and exuberance of spirits were hardly in accordance with the matronly appellation of Mrs. Ringwood, gambolled about the premises, attending to the flowers, the crumpling apples, the ancient dogs, the superannuated horses, the poultry, the dairy, and even the pigs, with a vivacity of delight that seemed to seek nothing but present amusement, although she made it subservient to the graver duties of her new station, becoming, in every respect, an excellent wife, an admirable manager of her household, and proving in due time, that notwithstanding her apparent volatility, she knew how to take the charge of a young family as well as the most sapient and prosy nurse in all Hampshire. When Ringwood had completed the payment of his father's debts, which he had so honourably undertaken to discharge, his disencumbered income would have allowed him to set up a handsome establishment; but both himself and Fanny had experienced such unalloyed felicity in their own plain and simple style of living, that they feared to try any experiments with additional servants or equipages, and agreed to persevere in the happy course they had first pursued, leaving the surplus of their fortune to accumulate for their younger children, a set of claimants who promised to be rather numerous. Fanny had made repeated overtures towards a reconciliation with her parents, all of which had met a cold, and even a supercilious rejection, but no sooner had she learned their reverses by the announced sale of Oakham-hall, than disregarding all their unkind injunctions, and following only the dictates of her own affectionate heart, she hurried up to London, threw

herself at their feet, and implored forgiveness ; while Ringwood, who had accompanied her, made a delicate but most cordial and earnest tender of such pecuniary assistance as his amended circumstances now qualified him to afford. Although Frampton, who was a proud man, declined this offer, he was not unaffected by the kindly and generous spirit that prompted it. A reconciliation ensued, and though Lady Susan, now that she had fallen from her high estate, could not bear to revisit the neighbourhood of Oakham-hall, Miss Frampton, after the London season was over, frequently accepted Fanny's invitation to pass the autumn at Brook-hatch, in consideration of which hospitality, she liberally conceded to its owner his long-contested title of *Squire* Ringwood. Here she had the supreme pleasure, so long as she remained, of setting the fashions ; and here too she most assiduously set her cap at squires, divines, fox-hunters, or whatever " worthy and respectable commoners " fortune threw in her way, all of whom admitted the charms of the stylish and elegant Miss Frampton, though none of them testified the smallest wish to make her change that name.

Gideon Welbeck, as many of his neighbours had anticipated, did not long survive the nuptials of Henry and Emily ; his constitution, shattered and weakened by his previous sufferings, never having recovered from the shock of Gunthorpe's apparition. Relieved from the apprehension of human punishment and exposure, he became a prey to spiritual horrors, imagining that the crime he had devised, although it had never been consummated, would infallibly consign him to eternal perdition. Under this appalling conviction, his disordered fancy conjured up ghastly visions that occasionally drove him to delirium, while his calmer moods degenerated into a fatuous imbecility, during the prevalence of which he called almost incessantly, with tears of doting impatient fondness, for his darling son Godfrey. The fearful workings of this mental machinery soon shook to pieces the crazy tenement that contained it, and his death was too desirable a release for himself to justify any deep regret on the part of his friends.

By his will, which his recent disturbed state of mind would not have allowed him to alter, even had he been so disposed, his daughter was constituted his sole and exclusive heiress, so that Henry succeeded to the whole of his vast property, a considerable portion of which, however, he

might have fairly claimed as a matter of right. Godfrey's name was not even mentioned, an omission which Henry, with his usual munificence, proposed to rectify by bestowing upon him a handsome share of his father's fortune. From this, however, he was dissuaded by his own wife as well as by Godfrey's, both of whom represented to him, that as the object of his proposed generosity was infirm of purpose, and had been strongly addicted to gambling, it would be only throwing temptation in his way to give him the command of a large sum of money. At their suggestion, therefore, and with the concurrence of Godfrey himself, who, during his residence at the Grange, had acquired some taste for agricultural pursuits, he purchased for him a beautifully situated farm, with a comfortable dwelling-house, in the immediate vicinity of Southampton, where the lame farmer, by which appellation he soon came to be distinguished, devoting himself to rural concerns and domestic pursuits, with the occasional relaxation of books, music, and field-sports, in which latter he was enabled to participate by the assistance of a pony, contrived to enjoy existence in spite of the constant companionship of his crutches. More than once, indeed, when his old unsettled or romantic spirit came over him, he would yearn for some indiscreet change, or propose to embark in some hazardous speculation, from which the superior good sense of his wife invariably succeeded in reclaiming him; so that, as he finally redeemed his pledge of becoming a steady family man, and a useful member of society, he was perhaps not less indebted to her than to himself for this most beneficial change. Had any one who compared his former wild and dissolute career with the respectability of his present life, inquired of Mary by what magic she had wrought this marvellous improvement, she might truly have replied, in the well-known words of the *Marchalle d'Ancre*, when accused of having obtained an undue command over the Queen-mother of France by means of sorcery, "I have used no other witchcraft than that influence which a strong mind will ever possess over a weak one."

In a small parlour of this farm, which Mary appropriated to her father as his smoking-room, the old man might frequently be seen sitting by the fire, or at the open window, according to the season, with two fair, curly-headed, beautiful grandchildren climbing up his knees, and forming a

group that forcibly recalled Cipriani's picture of Cupid's sporting with a Lion ; while their infant prattle contrasted strikingly with the gruff voice of the grandsire, as in words of menace, though with a look of the most affectionate tenderness, he growled out now and then, " Hallo! 'vast there, you youngsters! Start my timbers! if you touch my pipe, I'll sarve it out to you—give you a taste of the rope's end; so down with you, Larry; down, I say, Poll!"—His favourite haunt when he left home was the bow-windowed room of a public-house beside the Quay at Southampton, where, until very lately, the original from whom we have drawn our portrait, might be seen three or four days in the week, sipping his strong punch, plying his inseparable meerschaum, and gazing complacently down the water. Hence, after emptying his bowl, he would usually sally forth to the Quay, take his stand against the old capstan, criticise the sailing of every vessel that passed up or down Southampton-Water, and as he became gradually surrounded with a little knot of eager listeners, it was here that he loved to crack of the immense sums for which he had been exchequered; of the crops that he had formerly worked in his lucky little lugger the "Ax about!" of the money he had made, and the enterprises he had achieved, in his celebrated fast-sailing cutter the Longsplice; of the services rendered to him by his sagacious black mastiff Belzebug; and the hair-breadth escapes for which he was indebted to the fleetness of his favourite mare, who, now that she was past labour, was turned out to graze upon his son-in-law's farm, where a day seldom elapsed without her being visited and caressed by her old master. The Captain, for by this epithet he still continued to be known, becoming as he waxed older a praiser of the bygone time, in disparagement of the present, was accustomed to talk with great contempt of modern smugglers and their paltry adventures, though he candidly confessed that the difficulties with which they had to contend were materially increased. As he was, in every other respect, a most loyal character, it grieves us to add, that in adverting to this fact, he would occasionally speak in most irreverent terms of the Government, questioning their right to establish either customs or excise in the first instance, stigmatizing the Preventive Service as a rascally innovation, and condemning the Coast Blockade altogether as a monstrous act of tyranny and oppression, which hardly gave the

honest free-trader a chance of working a crop once in a twelvemonth.

About the time that Henry purchased the farm near Southampton, he received a letter from Mrs. Penguin, at Cork, confessing the falsehood and baseness of all the malignant slanders she had so industriously circulated against him, imploring his forgiveness in the most abject terms; stating that her paramour had deserted her for another woman, after robbing her of every shilling she possessed, and even leaving her liable for debts to a considerable amount, under which deplorable circumstances, since she dared not write to her injured husband, and had not a friend in the world, she supplicated Henry to extricate her from her difficulties, most solemnly promising, if he consented, to lead an amended life for the future. Only following the dictates of his own benevolent heart, when he obeyed the Christian precept of returning good for evil, Henry immediately despatched a person to Cork to release her from her embarrassments, and accompany her back to England, where he not only reconciled her to her mother, who was still living, but agreed to allow her an annual stipend, in addition to her small jointure, provided she should continue to deserve it by the propriety of her conduct. But the wretched woman was irreclaimable; she again eloped from her mother's house, and giving herself up to abandoned courses, became ultimately a prey to the want, misery, and utter degradation which they inevitably entail.

Previously to this occurrence, Henry had been relieved from another expected annuitant upon his bounty. Having convinced Barak Gunthorpe, before he left Southampton, that, from his habits of life, he could not be safely intrusted with any considerable sum of ready money; and that the great object of his existence, the double allowance of grog, would be much better secured to himself by a comfortable income, to be paid monthly, he prevailed upon him to give up Welbeck's order for a thousand pounds, and gave instructions to an agent in London for settling upon him the promised annuity. Henry added some gold to that with which the man had been already provided for his conveyance to Newcastle; but while he loitered in the capital, his incurable addiction to drunkenness carrying him to one of his old haunts, it was discovered that he had a sum of gold about his person, to procure which, he was attacked as he

returned home at night by two of the ruffians with whom he had been tippling. Half intoxicated as he was, he made so desperate a resistance, that he baffled the villains of their prey ; but he received such serious injury in the scuffle, that he was obliged to be conveyed to a hospital, where he expired about a fortnight afterward.

If we have bestowed birth and great wealth upon Henry, it has been only in obedience to the inevitable course of our narrative, and not because we wished to inculcate a clumsy and false moral, by holding up such vulgar distinctions either as a worthy incitement, or as a satisfactory reward for the practice of virtue. The lesson we have wished to impress has a directly opposite tendency. By the imperturbable equanimity of Henry under trials and oppressions of no common severity, we have endeavoured to show that virtue, however obscure, friendless, and traduced, is all-sufficing to itself, is superior to the injustice of the world, and can draw from its own bosom the materials of its own happiness ; while in the example of Gideon Welbeck, we have sought to inculcate, that ill-gotten wealth, so far from conferring any peace of mind, does but quicken the apprehensions, sharpen the remorse, and aggravate the misery of its possessor. Riches ought to be deemed a means, not an end. It was thus that Henry considered them ; and if they contributed, as they unquestionably did, to his own happiness, and that of a wife not less amiable and generous than himself, it was because their large fortune enabled them to contribute largely to the happiness of others. Limiting his own expenditure to the maintenance of an appropriate household and of a liberal, though unostentatious hospitality, he applied the whole residue of his great income to works of charity, benevolence, and public utility.

As he deemed the game laws one of the most monstrous insults of tyranny, considering the total disparity of the object, he rendered them innocuous upon his own property, by destroying the preserves, and throwing open his manors ; while he laboured to persuade the neighbouring gentry, that the self-punishing severity of their enactments was an incitement to violence, bloodshed, and crime, without effecting the prevention of poaching. Never was there a more ardent and munificent philanthropist than Henry Welbeck ; never did such a man possess a more congenial and enthusiastic helpmate than Emily, who accompanied her husband

in all his charitable excursions, until the care of her infant family gave her a still more delightful occupation at home ; and never were such exalted pursuits rewarded with a happiness more pure, unalloyed, and exquisite, than that which blessed the career of Henry and Emily Welbeck.

Reader ! in perusing works of fiction, it may have been your chance to encounter a hero who has been dubbed with the title of a gentleman, from his having employed a fashionable tailor, from his adroitness in tying a cravat, from his moving in an elevated sphere of life, from his proficiency in the hollow courtesies and hypocritical urbanity of polished society, from his glib and graceful fluency in a certain conventional slang, termed polite conversation, or from other superficial modes and forms of deportment which, when they do not represent the real feelings of the heart, are but as the deceitful stamp and gilding which, so long as it is not brought to the test or the assay, may give to the basest metal the currency of pure gold. A counterfeit gentleman of this class will not hesitate at a falsehood for the purpose of entrapping his friend in the sale of a horse ; he may become perjured by the violation of his marriage vow ; he may incur debts without the smallest prospect of repaying them ; he may seduce the wife of his friend, and afterward shoot him through the body in the process of affording him "the satisfaction of a gentleman ;"—for the miserable gratification of his heartless vanity, he may gain the affections of an inexperienced girl, and then leave her to pine and wither away in life-long anguish : in his selfish and sensual career, he may pass through the world without leaving it in any one respect the wiser or the better for his existence ; and yet it shall not dream of withholding from him the title of a gentleman and a man of honour.

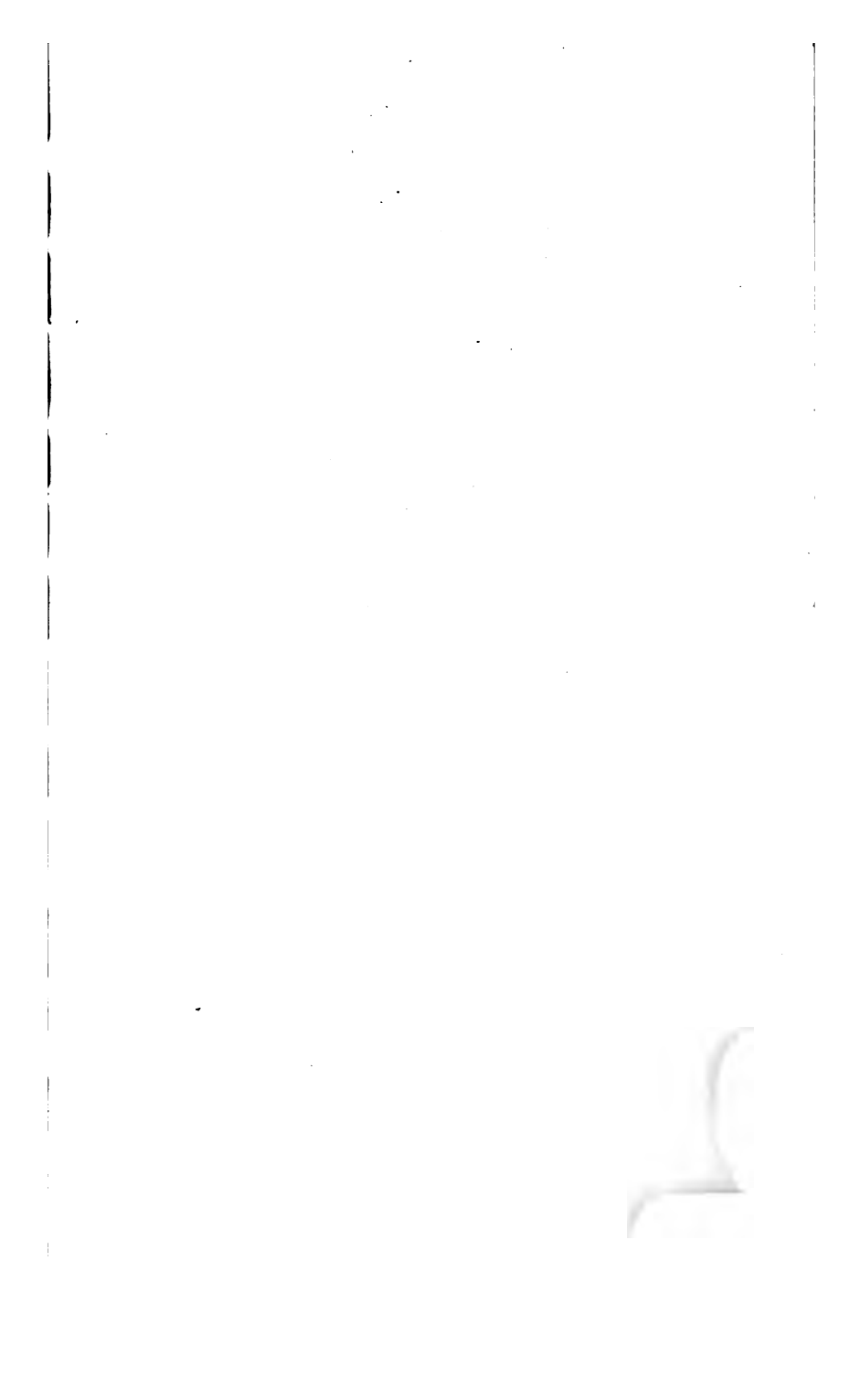
Not such a gentleman, and not a man of such honour, was Henry Welbeck. Neither depending upon such externals, nor upon adventitious aid of any sort, his gentility sprung from a heart that was earnest and sincere, gentle, generous, and brave ; and what urbanity, we would ask, what polish, what courtesy, can be so pure, gracious, and uniform, as that which, emanating from the overflowing be-

nevolence of the soul, derives its patent of gentility from Heaven? Despising the frivolities of fashion, he still preserved an almost quaker-like simplicity of garb ; but that over-formality of expression, and those little eccentricities of opinion, or demeanour, which, it may have been observed, became latterly less marked and prominent, were finally softened or subdued, by a more enlarged intercourse with the world, and, like the weeds which the farmer eradicates and burns, only served to fructify the soil upon which they grew. Democritus declared, that he would prefer the discovery of the cause of one of the works of nature to the diadem of Persia : and Henry might have averred with equal truth, that he would prefer the removal of a single human misery, to the possession of all the dignities and distinctions upon earth. In accordance with this philanthropical sentiment, he went about continually doing good, living for others, rather than for himself, acting as the steward, more than as the proprietor of his fine fortune ; banishing want, misery, and sickness, and, in many instances, reforming vice itself, wherever he came. If the code of fashion will not allow him to have been a perfect gentleman, it cannot deny him the more exalted merit of having been a good Christian ; not the nominal Christian, however, who, forgetting the spirit in the letter of the Gospel, limits his narrow view to forms, tenets, or modes of faith, for upon this latter point he held with Pope, that " His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right : " nor was he one who imbibed his own mind, and learned to hate his fellow-creatures, much more certainly than to love God, by indulging in theological disputes, for he fully agreed with Sir William Temple, that all such controversies as can never end, had much better never begin. Christianity appeared to him the most sublime, when it elevated its possessor into the character of an all-embracing humanist : he seldom talked religion, but never failed to practise it ; and if, in his active benevolence, he had not time to pray so often as others, he had the consolation of knowing that thousands were perpetually praying for him. Inflexible in his adherence to veracity, invariably returning good for evil, pure in his life, unsubdued by the most trying temptations, liable to few infirmities of temper or of passion, undaunted and indomitable amidst wrongs, reverses, and oppression, uncorrupted by prosperity and wealth, possessing in his sense of self-

gious duty that high moral courage which enabled him to despise the savage sophistries of the duellist, and a zealous friend to the liberties, enlightenment, and happiness of the whole human race, all of whom he contemplated as his brethren, we offer Henry Welbeck to the world in all the essential points of his character, as a specimen of a gentleman and a Christian, fully aware that his claim to these titles may be disputed by some, and only presuming to add, that he embodies forth the humble, and, perhaps, the mistaken conceptions of the writer.

THE END.

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